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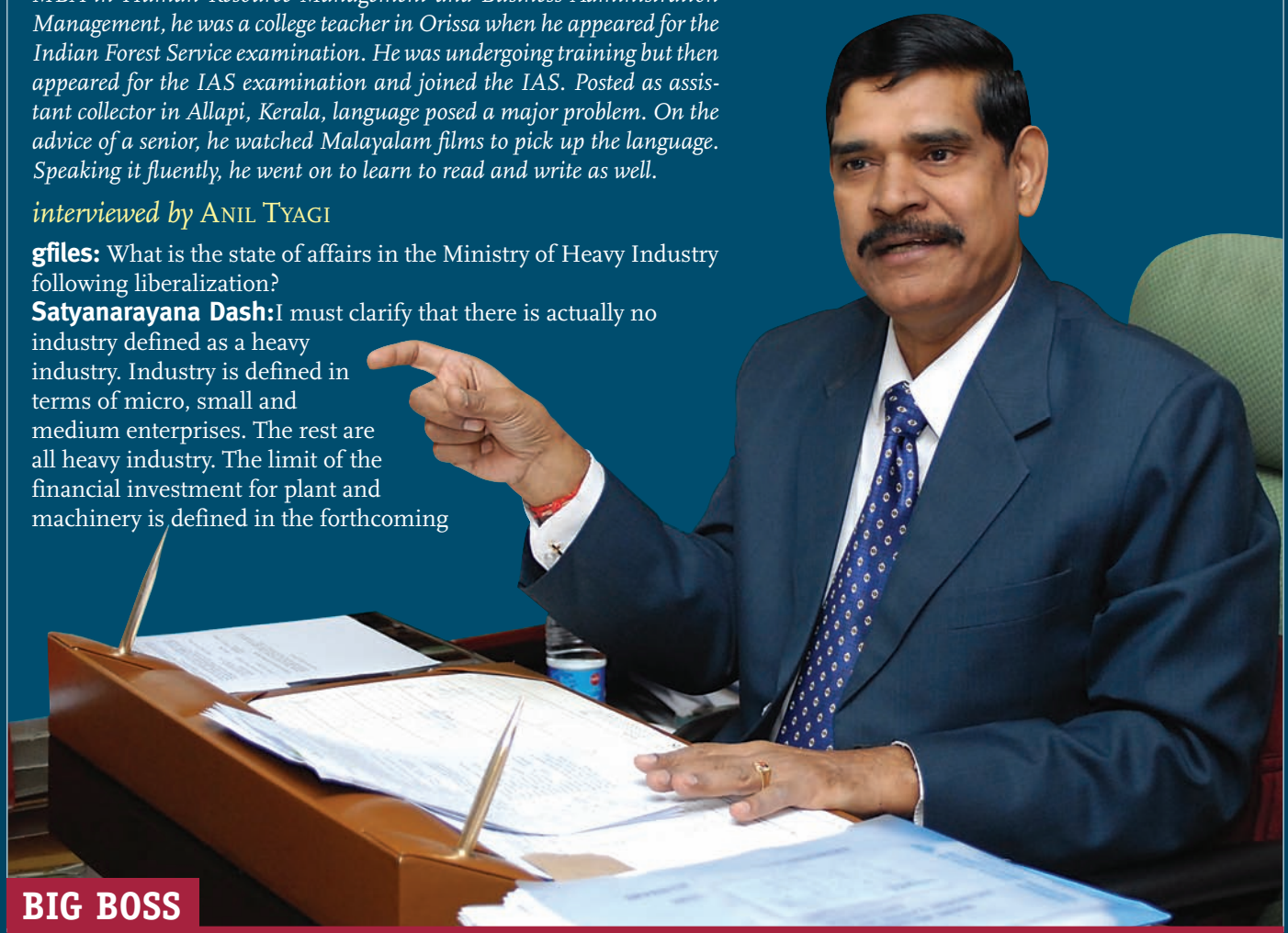
gfiles
INSIDE THE GOVERNMENT

SHARAD SAXENA



BIG BOSS

secretary, heavy industries & public enterprises | satyanarayana dash |

'My challenge is making the 16 loss-making PSUs profitable'

THOUGH Dr Satyanarayana Dash belongs to the 1973 IAS batch from Kerala, his family is originally from Orissa. His father, Digambar Dash, was a revenue officer in the state. The young Satyanarayana travelled all over Orissa thanks to his father's various postings. Holding a master's in physics, doctorate in economics, and MBA in Human Resource Management and Business Administration Management, he was a college teacher in Orissa when he appeared for the Indian Forest Service examination. He was undergoing training but then appeared for the IAS examination and joined the IAS. Posted as assistant collector in Allapi, Kerala, language posed a major problem. On the advice of a senior, he watched Malayalam films to pick up the language. Speaking it fluently, he went on to learn to read and write as well.

interviewed by ANIL TYAGI

gfiles: What is the state of affairs in the Ministry of Heavy Industry following liberalization?

Satyanarayana Dash: I must clarify that there is actually no industry defined as a heavy industry. Industry is defined in terms of micro, small and medium enterprises. The rest are all heavy industry. The limit of the financial investment for plant and machinery is defined in the forthcoming

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Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Act. It defines investment limits in micro industry as below Rs 25 lakh, in small industry as Rs 25 lakh to Rs 5 crore, in medium as Rs 5-10 crore, and large is above Rs 10 crore. So there is nothing defined as heavy industry. There are large units in other departments like steel. The fertilizer Ministry has fertilizer plants, the oil sector has oil plants. We look after some of these large units, whatever is not looked after by other Ministries. We basically look after the capital goods sector like the machine tool sector, textile machinery sector, plant process machinery sector and automobile sector. For development of these sectors we have constituted Development Councils, consisting of industry and Ministry representatives. They give suggestions relating to fiscal concession, taxation concessions, and so on.

gfiles: *What are other areas of your responsiblities?*

SD: Another aspect to this is that there are certain facilities which don't exist in the country. The government can think of one-time support for setting up such facilities. But such an institute or research organization should be capable of financing itself thereafter. Suppose we want to develop the automobile sector, to have the latest technology to reduce vibrations in vehicles, to reduce emissions to satisfy Bharat II and Bharat III norms. From April 2010, we will adopt Bharat IV. You've got to set up advanced technology, high-end testing and research facilities. These testing facilities are not available in India except on a small scale at the Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI), Pune. That is an industry organization. They have set up a laboratory on a small scale. When a company tries to develop a prototype model, they send it to this laboratory for emission testing. All emission testing facilities are being provided at seven locations. In the north, our main unit will be at Manesar, Haryana, called International Centre for Automotive Technology (ICAT). The second unit will be in Chennai, called Global Automotive Research Centre (GARC); the third in Indore, called National Automotive Test Track (NATT); the fourth is called Vehicles Research & Development Establishment, Ministry of Defence, at Ahmed Nagar. Here defence vehicles are tested. The sixth unit is in Silchar, Assam, called Hill Driving Mechanics Institute Inspection & Maintenance Centre. The seventh is in Rae Bareli, for off-road vehicles like tractors and dumpers and for analysis of all accidents in the country. They also do Specialized Vehicle Training for off-road vehicles. This project, called National Automotive Testing & Research and Development Infrastructure Project, is worth Rs 1,780 crore and will be completed in three years.

'The Eleventh Plan period foresees a 9 per cent GDP growth while the capital goods sector should grow at around 18 per cent'

gfiles: *Why is this necessary?*

SD: It is required as large-scale automobile production facilities are coming up in India. We produce 10.8 million vehicles – 1.5 million passenger cars, 8 million two-wheelers, half a million three-wheelers, 5.5 million commercial vehicles, 2.5 million special utility vehicles. China produces 5.2 million passenger cars and 1.9 million commercial vehicles. Japan produces 9.8 million passenger cars, and 1.7 million passenger commercial vehicles. The US produces 4.4 million passenger cars, 6.9 million commercial vehicles.

gfiles: *What is the Ministry doing in the face of the meltdown and what are your views regarding revival?*

SD: The manufacturing sector contributes about 26 per cent of the GDP and constitutes 80 per cent of the industrial production. It is a force multiplier and creates employment, promotes agriculture and service sector and spins a cycle of wealth creation. The capital goods sector is inextricably linked with manufacturing. In order to ensure steady growth and to enhance the competitiveness of the industry in the context of increasing globalization, we need to ensure the growth momentum is sustained and the key impediments to growth are removed or negated. The department of heavy industry has recommended removal of inverted duty structure, anomalies in

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From the Editor-in-Chief

END-OF-THE year issues of most news magazines usually focus their content on lighter subjects –surveys, entertainment, encapsulated regurgitations of their own material, predictions and so on. *gfiles*, however, has chosen to focus on a serious subject – terror and its implications for governance – because we believe that the politician-led debate on this subject now gaining intensity as the general election approaches, is mostly political posturing. The holiday season is no excuse not to hammer home to the reading public the discomforting message that those engaged in combating terrorism overlook some of the most fundamental truths.

The war against terror is not just about guns, slogans, bullets, sabre-rattling, and harsh interrogations. And nor can all terrorists be cast in the same mold – because they do not come from the same die or cast. The fight, therefore, must be nuanced, proactive in the skilled recognition of the causes and sources for motivation, carefully calibrated in preventing violence as well as striking forcefully, discerning in action against urban terrorists and insurgents, and equipped with the best intelligence network, forensics and expert investigators who can bat a 100 strike rate in catching the right terrorist and making a watertight case for conviction.

But even more important, warn the country's top experts who have written for this issue of *gfiles*, is a unified national resolve to rid India of this scourge. And this will flounder so long as the country's politicians continue to use the issue of terrorism to divide rather than unite citizens for narrow electoral gain.

One of the country's foremost intelligence experts, AK Verma, former chief of RAW, puts it bluntly: "Fighting terrorism is not a one-tool affair. This is a matter of confidence. Whatever you do you must have the confidence of your citizens that you are doing the right thing. You cannot earn that confidence merely by strengthening the law or police forces. You have to show that you are governing in the interest of the country. Now, unfortunately, there is a crisis of confidence. The *aam aadmi* does not think that you are governing. You are playing vote politics. The problem starts from here. If you start vote politics then neither police nor strengthening the legal apparatus is going to help because you come up to a point and can't go any further because of the political compulsions. The citizen is confused."

Veteran journalist Vijay Sanghvi echoes this sentiment: "The whole country has seen the same exercise (of ritualistic responses) time and again. It does not matter that the Home Minister was a member of the Congress party or the Bharatiya Janata Party or believed in a different kind of secularism. Their responses are the same. At times one gets an eerie feeling that none of them understands the real gravity of the situation."

And Col Hariharan, among India's most consulted thinkers on military and strategic subjects, who was also intelligence adviser to the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in Sri Lanka, raises important points about the pitfalls of deployment of armed forces personnel to deal with domestic insurgent and terrorist violence. The brutalization of the soldier, he argues, can often have a negative impact on the overall effort.

Our politicians would do well to read these and other opinions and analyses by some of the best brains in this country as the year comes to a close so that they may, perhaps, persuade themselves to make a New Year's resolution to stop politicizing terrorism on the eve of a new election.

INDERJIT BADHWAR

LETTERS: Some of the pieces in *gfiles* are very good. I enjoy Niranjan Desai's pieces. The latest issue (November 2008) was particularly enjoyable with its inside report on 24 Akbar Road and down-valuing of the UP Chief Secretary. I also liked the BG Deshmukh piece, including his blunt observation on Mani Shankar Aiyar's boast. I wish he had written a little about the great work that he has been doing in Mumbai after retirement with civil society groups. Perhaps you should run a column on "life after retirement" when bureaucrats (several of them) really flower in so many ways. Congratulations to you and the *gfiles* team for the high-quality product (despite small glitches, for instance on page 18 of the last issue)!
Avik Ghosh, Uttarakhand

There is an error in the BG Deshmukh article. He was Cabinet Secretary from 23-8-1986 to 27-3-1989 and not from 1985.
Divakar L, via email
The error is regretted — Editor

Continued from page 2

customs and excise duties, and weighted deduction of expenses for R&D activities to the Finance Ministry.

The department looks after 32 operating central PSUs, the auto sector and some segments under the capital goods sector. So far as the PSUs are concerned, the national Common Minimum Programme clearly states that sick industry shall be revived. Accordingly, sick/loss-making PSUs were referred to the Board for Restructuring of Public Sector Enterprises (BRPSE). So far, out of 27 such PSUs under the department, the government has approved revival/restructuring in case of 13 by cleaning up the balance sheet and infusing funds. Eight have since started making profits. As regards the auto sector, a meeting of the Development Council is being called. All issues affecting the industry's performance will be discussed. The capital goods industry is also showing signs of a slowdown. A scheme for providing fresh impetus to this important sector is under formulation.

Our Ministry is taking these steps to counter the global meltdown:

- In a situation of global economic crisis with prices of oil, cement and steel falling sharply, the focus has to be infrastructural investment where about $500 billion is to be spent over five years. Hence CPSEs in our department operating in infrastructure, like Bridge and Roof, Engineering Projects (India) Ltd, Braithwaite Burn & Jessop Ltd (BBJ), Braithwaite & Co. Ltd (BCL) are asked to put thrust on completion of projects undertaken in time in order to derive maximum benefits.
- The global meltdown will not hit the power sector in India as the domestic demand will be high and our targets are set at 78577 MW for the Eleventh Five-Year Plan (2007-2012) and 82000 MW for the Twelfth Five-Year Plan (2012-2017). The global meltdown presents an opportunity for sourcing hi-tech supercritical power equipment and high-end high voltage transmission equipment and technology (765 KV and above) at a cheaper price since near-saturated markets abroad may lead to slower growth.
- The growth in the power equipment manufacturing sector in the nuclear power arena will also help since the signing of the nuclear deal has presented an opportunity for BHEL and other CPSEs like Heavy Engineering Corporation, Ranchi, Instrumentation Ltd, Kota to bag substantial orders. The target is to achieve 20,000 MW annual nuclear capacity by 2020 (against 4120 MW now).
- In this scenario, where export orders are going down, CPSEs have to focus on the big domestic market with untapped rural markets (18 per cent of villages don't have power). There are large possibilities in development of the food processing sector connecting to rural markets and development of the cold chain infrastructure.
- Hence the basic strategies in this scenario would be to focus on the domestic market, maximizing core competence of the industries, concentrate on infrastructure sectors and tap whatever potentialities exist in the export market. The liquidity crunch prevailing in the economy as a result of the meltdown will be sorted out by the monetary policies undertaken by the RBI. Our CPSEs are being sensitized on these aspects.

'We have development councils for the capital goods sector like the textile machinery, machine tools and automobile sectors'

gfiles: *Is the capital goods industry growing at the expected rate in relation to GDP?*

SD: The Eleventh Plan period foresees a 9 per cent GDP growth and the capital goods sector, which is at the core of the manufacturing sector, should grow at around 18 per cent. The growth target fixed for the capital goods sector is 20 per cent for the next 10 years for achieving the target of 9 per cent growth in GDP. The NMCC, in its report 'National Strategy for Manufacturing for Achieving the Identified Goals' has stressed the need for R&D and Technology Upgradation, Skill Development, Adopting Best Manufacturing Practices and Production Techniques, achieving globally acceptable quality levels, export generation, establishment of technology parks and infrastructure development. The growth in the capital goods sector during the first five months of the current financial year has been only 9.2 per cent against the annual growth rate of 16.9 per cent in 2007-08.

gfiles: *Will it be possible or feasible to revive sick PSUs in view of the liquidity crisis?*

SD: The revival of sick PSUs is continuing as per the Common Minimum Programme. A major portion of the revival schemes involve cleaning up the balance sheet. Therefore, the liquidity aspect is not affecting revival majorly. Marginal fresh funding is being done through government budgetary support. In case of 13 PSUs of the department, where revival has been approved by the government, out of about Rs 5,800 crore, a major chunk (about 72 per cent) involves waivers/conversions and government guarantees and the like which are in the form of non-cash assistance. The liquidity crunch will be taken care of by RBI's monetary and credit policies.

gfiles: *How are you reviving sick units?*

SD: We found some could be revived through Public-Private Partnership. We have one sick unit, Bharat Heavy Plates and Vessels, in Vishakhapatnam. They were manufacturing heavy pressure plates and

'BHEL has become a world brand with fourteen manufacturing units and a turnover of Rs 22,000 crore and a market cap of Rs 70,000 crore'

heavy fabrications of the HPCL refinery in Vizag. We sent a team of Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited to see what they could manufacture for them and found that BHEL can give them orders for their requirements. BHEL has been assigned a high-capacity target in the Eleventh Five-Year Plan. So we recommended that this unit be taken over by BHEL.

Then, we had a unit manufacturing railway wagons at Mokameh, Bihar, called Bharat Wagon Engineering Ltd. We discussed with the Railways, told them here was a readymade unit, just take over and modernize it. They agreed. Now we have 16 loss-making and 16 profit-making PSUs. My biggest challenge is how to make these 16 loss-making PSUs profit-making.

gfiles: *So, having stopped setting up units, you are truly only a facilitator now.*

SD: Yes. During the licensing days, there was an Industrial Development and Regulation Act, 1951. Under this, we issued licences. There was a Director General, Technical Development (DGTD) who issued licences. Now the Act is amended. The licensing requirement is altered. The compulsory requirement for a licence is still there for the small-scale sector. There were 856 items reserved for the small-scale sector, now only 14 items require licences. So, if some large unit wants to produce those items, they still need a licence.

There is another rule. If an industry is being set up with foreign investment then it can go the automatic route and through the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB). Those industries only have to inform the RBI. But those industries like some small-scale industry where more than 25 per cent foreign equity is invested will come for FIPB approval. Cigars and cigarettes, electronics, aerospace and any other industry that is already under FIPB all have to take permission. All that goes to the Ministry of Commerce and Finance. All capital goods industry comes to us.

gfiles: *Have you achieved self-sufficiency in the capital goods sector?*

SD: Each sector has its own parameters. The turnover of the capital goods sector is around one lakh crore rupees. Out of this, the heavy electrical equipment sector is only Rs 50,000 crore. The textiles sector turnover is around Rs 3000 crore but imports are Rs 9000 crore. We have been importing textile machinery from China. So the Planning Commission said one item of automatic looms will be allowed to be imported. There is a scheme called Technological Up-gradation Fund Scheme.

gfiles: *Are the PSEs in your kitty performing as per world standards?*

SD: We have fixed some benchmarks like financial, production and so on for performance and we monitor. If somewhere they require automation, upgradation and the like, we provide it. We have Enterprises Resource Planning (ERP), it is a comprehensive package which links all the manufacturing enterprises. We also monitor and appoint independent directors. If some enterprise has a Chairman and Managing Director, then 50 per cent of the board should be independent directors. If some enterprise has a Managing Director only, then one-third should be independent directors. The Department of Public Enterprises has a data bank which provides professionally qualified directors.

gfiles: *You have 16 loss-making PSUs. How long are you going to bear the losses? You say your approach is to revive PSUs.*

SD: Our priority is to revive the PSUs. Earlier, the figure was 32. With our efforts, 16 are profit-making and 16 loss-making. In some cases, the BRPSE recommended going in for a joint venture partner. Identifying a joint venture takes time as you have an inter-ministerial group, then you examine the potentiality of possible joint venture companies. Some units need parliamentary approval. It is a cumbersome process. We are also asking some state governments whether they would like to take over the PSUs located in their states. For example, we asked the Jammu and Kashmir government about the HMT factory at Chinar. They are willing.

gfiles: *Isn't it odd that the government produces watches?*

SD: HMT was set up as there were no good watches. At that time the concept was of self sufficiency, whatever we don't have we'll produce. HMT was a brand. People used to wait for HMT watches. Even I borrowed a watch for my exam. What happened is that they did not modernize. They keep producing mechanical watches whereas other manufacturers shifted to digital watches.

gfiles: *BHEL is the major PSU under your Ministry. How is it contributing to the growth engine of the nation?*

SD: BHEL has become a world brand. It has 14 manufacturing units, four regional power sector centres, 15 regional offices. Its turnover in 2007-08 was Rs 22,000 crore. It is making profits for 32 years and also paying a dividend to the government. BHEL has a market cap of Rs 70,000 crore. It has kept updating itself with the latest technology. Three out of four bulbs come from BHEL. It also produces electric locomotives. It not only produces power but is in distribution also. It manufactures 500 MW power project machinery. BHEL employs 40,000 people and is going to recruit more. It can supply 10,000 MW power machinery. It is going to increase this capacity to 15,000 MW by 2009. g

by Arun Lavania

Lalu babua's story

Lalu Prasad: India's Miracle
By Neena Jha & Shivnath Jha
Bismillah: The Beginning Foundation
Price: Rs 1500

"LALU PRASAD is a household name in India after Indira Gandhi." This is the apt opening sentence of this book, and a fact even his opponents would admit. The book convincingly makes this point by detailing the trajectory of Lalu's life from penury to Minister for Railways. Over 80 full-page pictures of Lalu in different moods add to the well-produced 215-page book.

Lalu moved from his village to Patna for schooling at the age of six and famously studied by lamplight. At university in Patna, he learnt the basics of politics and endeared himself to all. He was "Lalu Bhaiya" to the girls. He married Rabri Devi after a pitched battle, according to her, because, unlike her sisters, she was going to a house with a thatched roof.

In the early 1970s, when the student movement was at its zenith, Lalu shone as a leader and addressed Jayaprakash Narayan as Lok Nayak. He was detained under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) and later fathered nine children in protest against forced sterilization during the Emergency.

In 1977, the Janata Party came to power and provided a platform to student leaders to rise in state and national politics. When the Janata Party came to power in Bihar in the Assembly polls of 1989, Lalu became Chief Minister. Meanwhile, Prime Minister VP Singh implemented the Mandal Commission report and Lalu extracted maximum mileage out of it to consolidate his position among the Yadavs. His decision to arrest LK Advani during the latter's Ram Rathyatra made him a hero of Muslims, too.

When Lalu was brought down by accusations of involvement in the fodder scam, he installed his wife as his successor and ruled the state by proxy for another couple of years. In his present stint as Railways Minister, he has garnered admiration by engineering the turnaround of Indian Railways.

There are some anomalies in the book. It errs in saying that Lalu planned to arrest Advani on his own. Mulayam Singh Yadav, Lalu's *bete noir*, had planned to arrest Advani the moment the Rathyatra entered UP to please the minorities in his state. Prime Minister VP Singh agreed but secretly asked Lalu to go ahead with Advani's arrest as he did not want Mulayam to become the champion of the minorities in UP – also Singh's home state. Mulayam never forgave Singh.

As regards inducting Rabri Devi as his successor, Lalu was in two minds. It was Chandra Shekhar who advised him to nominate his wife as Chief Minister for political reasons.

The first 38 pages, devoted to the history of Bihar, can be skipped for they are hardly relevant. The occasional insertion of newspaper articles dwelling on the economy of Bihar is a dampener. The six-page report of inquiry into the conduct of Central Bureau of Investigation officers who requisitioned the services of the Army for execution of the non-bailable warrant against Lalu in the fodder scam is also out of place. There is no need for the authors to push an agenda; perhaps they fail to realize that people love Lalu despite the fodder scam case. As for the four pages devoted to the authors' profile, a paragraph would have been sufficient.

The strength of the book lies in its factually demolishing the widely held misconception that Lalu's début as Chief Minister was pure serendipity and not a consequence of earlier political struggle; that political power, intelligence, communication skill and administrative acumen are the monopoly of select castes and the convent class; and that Lalu can be dubbed casteist. g

Young Lalu with Rabri (extreme left) and children visit Taj: the innocent years

The strength of the book lies in its factually demolishing the widely held misconception that Lalu's début as Chief Minister was pure serendipity

THE HUMBLE CHILD

After becoming Chief Minister, Lalu visited his ancestral village Phulwaria to meet his mother Mirchhia Devi. He told her, "Mai! Ha mukhya mantri ban gaini (Mother! I have become Chief Minister)."

"Mukhya mantri ka ho re, babua (What's Chief Minister, my child)?"

"Mai! Hathua raj mil gail (Mother! I usurped the power of Hathua Raj)." Lalu used the local term 'Hathua Raj'(a local kingdom) which his mother understood. Soon she was brimming with joy. While she embraced and kissed her son, Lalu touched her feet. The innocent query of the mother is enough to explain from which family background Lalu had come.

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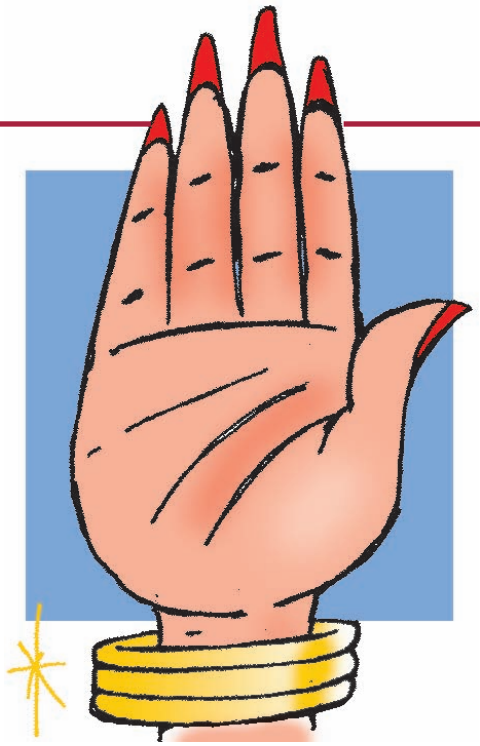
Reins loose in Mahila Congress

hotelier chief breaks conventions



PRABHA Thakur, formerly a two-term Lok Sabha member and currently a Rajya Sabha member, who is also president of the All-India Mahila Congress, is having a field day. About three months ago, at the behest of a Central leader from Kashmir, she appointed Indu Pawar president of the state unit without informing, let alone obtaining the approval of, the General Secretary in charge of the Mahila Congress, Mohsina Kidwai. Further, the party constitution provides for not more than 23 office-bearers at the Central level. However, Thakur increased the number to 45.

Thakur has a hotel business in different states and reportedly owes her political career to industrialist BK Modi. Besides Modi, her present mentors in the party are two powerful General Secretaries and two Union Ministers.

Minister for Women and Child Development Renuka Chowdhury recently nominated an obscure but wealthy woman to the lucrative post of Chairperson of the UP Social Welfare Board on Thakur's recommendation. According to party tradition, such appointments are made on the recommendations of the Mahila Congress president. However, insiders started whispering that the recommendations were not entirely above board and state Congress president Reeta Bahuguna complained to party president Sonia Gandhi. The Minister has been instructed to ignore Thakur's recommendations for similar nominations in other states.

Tch, tch, Aiyar!

assistant fails to bag ticket

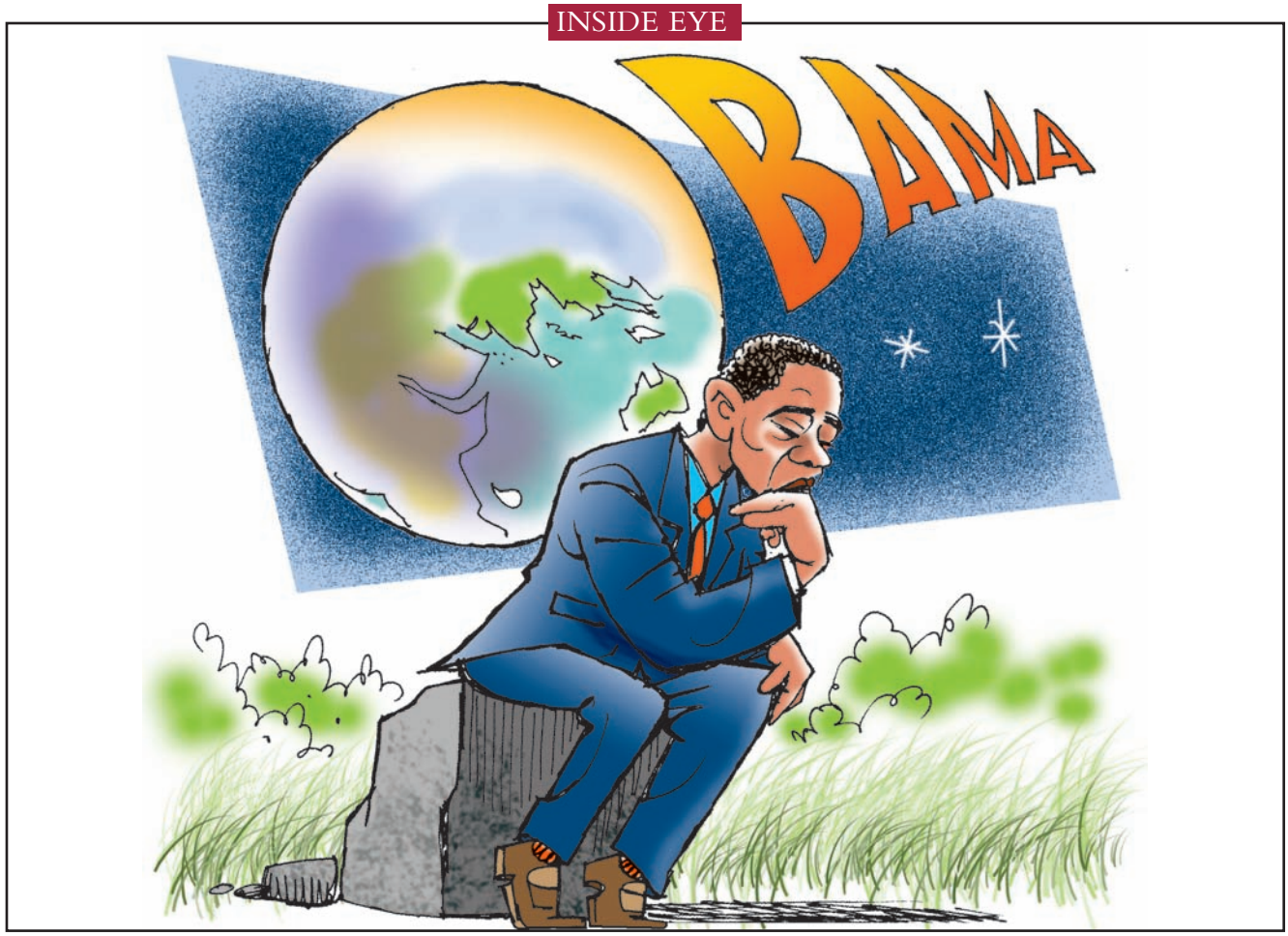
MINISTER for Panchayati Raj and Development of North Eastern Regions Mani Shankar Aiyar backed the candidature of his private assistant, Nivedita Nair, in the Delhi Assembly polls. She was seeking a ticket from Patparganj and Aiyar, also a well-known champion of women's empowerment, moved heaven and earth to help her. He wrote to state party president Jai Prakash, Chief Minister Sheila Dixit, General Secretary Ashok Gehlot, and was ever willing to accompany Nair to meet leaders with a say in ticket distribution.
A Central Minister is empowered to employ two private assistants from outside the government who are entitled to government accommodation, vehicle and salary. Strangely, Nair neither comes to the Ministry nor uses an official vehicle or accommodation. Sources say she would keep enquiring frantically about who was calling the shots in ticket distribution, and, once given the name, would drive Aiyar in her personal car to meet the leader. Her failure to bag the ticket has rebounded on Aiyar – the flock of ambitious women leaders is voicing disenchantment with him.

Minister as devil

babus avoiding post

SWAMI Prasad Maurya, the UP BSP president and Cooperatives Minister, is in search of an officer who can take up the job of Registrar of Cooperative Societies (RCS) but without success. At present, Principal Secretary (Cooperatives) Amal Kumar Verma is holding additional charge.

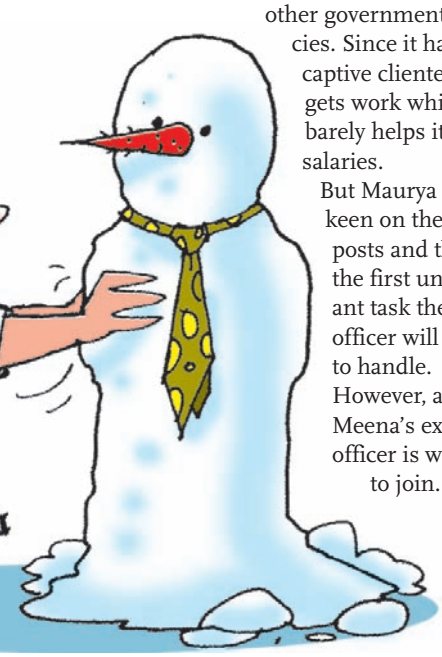
The Minister has already tested four officers, each of whom failed to live up to his expectations. BL Meena, the last incumbent, was removed after he refused to okay a proposal for the creation of 200 posts in the Pradesh Cooperative Cold Storage Federation (PACSFED). Meena argued that this would only add to the wage bill of PACSFED, set up in the good old days of socialism for opening cold storages in rural areas for the benefit of potato farmers. Over a decade ago, the govern-



ILLUSTRATIONS: ARUNA

ment had decided to get rid of the redundant stores and many were actually sold. PACSFED had since become a construction agency for cooperative bodies and other government agencies. Since it has a captive clientele, it gets work which barely helps it to pay salaries.

But Maurya is keen on the new posts and this is the first unpleasant task the new officer will have to handle. However, after Meena's exit, no officer is willing to join.



Manmohan in LS?
search for safe seat

THAT he has never been elected to the Lok Sabha is the only criticism Prime Minister Manmohan Singh faces. To prove that he is a man of the masses, he is reportedly exploring the possibility of contesting the next Parliamentary election from Punjab. The central intelligence agencies have apparently suggested Amritsar as the safest bet.

Cricketer-turned-TV anchor Navjot Singh Sidhu of the BJP represents Amritsar in the Lok Sabha. He was approached to shift to another constituency with the promise that the Congress would field a weak candidate against him in return. The BJP is the political ally of the Akali Dal (Badal) in Punjab and the party too was brought into the loop. Sidhu turned down the proposal, and the Akalis followed suit. Now, the Jalandhar seat is the only option left – for two reasons. It is represented by the Congress and had once elected another non-political Prime Minister – Inder Kumar Gujral. g

THE PARAMOUNTCY OF

You cannot earn people's confidence merely by strong laws or police forces. You have to

TERRORISM has existed for two or three thousand years for different reasons. Today, it is related to a perception of violation of identity – religious, ethnic or linguistic. The peculiarity about terrorism is that it operates from both sides of morality. The two opponents, the terrorist and the authority against which the terrorism is directed, both claim a moral basis. The terrorist sees himself as a freedom fighter; the authority sees him as a criminal. This has been responsible for the United Nations' failure to come out with a single definition of terrorism. There are over a hundred definitions. This has also prevented the United Nations from passing a resolution against terrorism.

In Asia, terrorism is largely related to religion, particularly Islam. There is a perception in the Islamic community that it has been unfairly dealt with. There are issues like Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, and, for some, Kashmir. They feel there is no other way to seek redress except by highlighting their grievances and gaining publicity all over the world through terrorist acts. People react, the government reacts and this makes the terrorist happy. The larger the number of victims, the happier he is, because of wider publicity.

But there are ideological and doctrinal causes as well. In the seventh century, Islam was bequeathed by Prophet Mohammad to his followers in Medina. He was trying to create a bulwark of supporters, strengthen their resolve by following a demanding ideology. That seventh century Islam given to a tribal society is the ideal of radical Islam today, and also of the Salafis, Wahabis and terrorists all over the world.

In Islamic Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, or Iraq, there is a variation. Terrorism in an Islamic society or country is different from terrorism in a non-Islamic society. In an Islamic society, the causes become different. Schools of thought developed in Islam as time went by. Sunnis think that Shias are a conspiracy of the Jews against Sunni Islam. In Iraq and Pakistan, the Shias are victimized and, in retaliation, they are victimizing the Sunnis. So here the cause is different but the basis is the same. The radical Sunnis want the entire world to become Sunni Muslims. The Shias want to defend themselves but essentially the hardliners in both sects want the same thing – to spread Islam all over the world.

Terror wars: breaking all boundaries

In Pakistan, other factors come in. When the first Afghan war was being fought, the Americans took the support of the Pakistanis to build a force to oust the Soviets from Afghanistan. That was the beginning of *jehad* as it is known today. The Pakistanis had an agenda of their own – to pursue pan-Islamic Pakistani domination. They joined in enthusiastically, and trained the Mujahideen. They took money from the Americans and trained people from various parts of the world who came to Afghanistan to fight the Soviets. When the Soviets were driven out, the trained jehadis who remained were at the beck and call of Pakistan. They were sent to other theatres of Islamic turbulence like Turkistan, Bosnia, Chechnya, Philippines. Pakistan thought it could become a pan-Islamic force because, after Indonesia and India, it is the third largest Islamic country. And, being Asians, Pakistani Muslims are more cerebral than those of West Asia, who are guided more by emotion. They could think out five-year or 10-year plans and implement them. That kind of planning is not possible in West Asia or North Africa.

The Americans knew about it. They knew that the money which they would now be sending to fight Afghan War II, which was against Osama bin Laden, would be used by

When the Soviets were driven from Afghanistan, the trained *jehadis* who remained were at the beck and call of Pakistan. They were sent to other theatres of Islamic turbulence like Turkistan, Bosnia, Chechnya

FEARLESS GOVERNANCE

show you are governing in the national interest and not playing vote politics

Pakistan elsewhere. Yet they kept up a relationship with Pakistan because they thought Pakistan was indispensable. Now, unwilling to accept the duplicity any more, they are entering Waziristan. It is a really dangerous area, where radical Islam has its strongest fort and staunchest believers. They don't care a damn what happens to them personally. Throughout history, the people of this belt have been ungovernable. Nobody has been able to control these Pakhtoons on both sides of the Durand Line. They have become one solid mass and the Americans don't know what to do with them. The Pakistanis certainly don't know what to do with them because a good part of the Pakistani Army is drawn from that area. Talibanisation is another face of terrorism. Now this talibanisation has spread eastwards in Pakistan, and has reached Islamabad and Rawalpindi – encouraged by segments of the Pakistani leadership itself.

THE Americans tried to end it after the defeat of the Soviets but failed because of two factors. They needed Pakistan to pacify Afghanistan and for access to oil-rich Central Asia. The other factor was Pakistan's duplicity. They took American money but didn't do the job. They promoted the new Taliban who fought against the Americans in Afghanistan. Now the new Taliban is ruling throughout the entire seven tribal areas of FATA. It has reached the North-West Frontier Province also. It has controlled Swat.

The Islamic terrorists in India want an Islamic caliphate here, with the Shariat as the law in this country. Every Muslim in India does not want it. There are those who disagree in their heart of hearts but don't have the courage to stand up and defy because Islam lays down in very clear terms that there can't be a re-interpretation of the Koran. The Koran and the Prophet are beyond criticism of any kind by a Muslim. So there is no freedom of speech for a Muslim. It implies that the Koran does not allow a liberal Muslim to coexist.

Look at recent incidents of terrorism. The terrorists who have been caught and interrogated have sometimes spoken of a revenge motivation. But the real motive is the establishment of an Islamic caliphate. Whether just educated or highly educated, a multinational corporation executive earning Rs 19 lakh a year, all have the same motive. Such terrorists are the only ones operating in this country and they want to ensure that everybody else comes on to the same wavelength as them.

India has had Muslims and Hindus coexisting since the beginning of the last millennium. The number of Muslims increased because of Muslim rulers. The Hindu had no option except to coexist. But that did not really mean a development of compassionate understanding of each other. They had a civilized relationship where they didn't interfere with each other. But there was no assimilation, there was no integration. This is a fact we have lost sight of. There was never a feeling of brotherhood between the two. It doesn't exist even today. So, what is the result? A responsible Muslim voice in the government has privately expressed the opinion that we are moving towards a civil war, a civil war which will be fought on every street, in every village, in every town. This country could be divided into sixteen nations or more. g

The writer is former Secretary, RAW

A new approach for India

THE problem lies in our governance. To fight terrorism, we should stop all funding of Wahabi and Salafi money from West Asia, the UAE and Saudi Arabia. There should be a will to do it, then you will find the resources to do it. We must also stop such teaching in institutions that inject thoughts of violence, revenge and intolerance. Such teaching inspires a belief that violence is permissible and killing others can add glory to your ideology. The third thing is to identify the people from that community who don't think like this, and get them together, provide them platforms, ask them to speak out on TV and in think tanks and at various places.

Fourth, promote a debate between these people and the others so that they identify the problems between them leading to terrorism. This means reinterpreting, accepting some liberal reforms – freedom of speech, the Constitution as the highest law of the land, gender equality and so on. What is one first, Muslim or Indian? Mohammad Ali, one of the Ali brothers, once stated that he was an Indian as well as a Muslim and the arc of his Islamic identity didn't intersect with the arc of his Indian citizenship. Can this be possible? The two arcs have to intersect and you have to come to terms with the reality that either you are an Indian first or you are a Muslim first. This question can't be evaded now as the foundation of terrorism gets built directly from this nuanced perception. The terrorist thinks that he is a citizen of Umma and he is fighting its cause and the Indian nation does not come into the picture at all.

From the point of view of governance, it is a matter of confidence. Whatever the authority does must be seen by citizens as being the right thing. You cannot earn their confidence merely by strengthening the law or police forces. You have to show that you are governing in the interest of the country. Now, unfortunately, there is a crisis of confidence. The *aam aadmi* thinks you are not governing, you are playing vote politics. The problem starts from here. If you start playing vote politics then neither the police nor strengthening the legal apparatus is going to help because you come to a point beyond which you can't go due to political compulsions and the citizen is confused. You have to govern fearlessly. When electoral victory is given top priority, national interests are not kept at the same level. If you start from this paradigm then everything else becomes false.

THE ENEMY YOU DON'T SEE

The unconventional warfare involved in tackling insurgents brutalizes the hapless soldier

by Col R Hariharan

ARMIES face a thankless task if they are called upon to fight insurgents – a section of their own people. The media is often more sympathetic to the plight of the population affected by the operations than the problems faced by the soldier. Troops feel both the public and media are unfair to soldiers doing their duty. Their grouse is understandable because the guerrilla operates among the people and only a thin line divides him and his sympathizers among the population.

Invariably, troops employed in counter-insurgency tasks face charges of human rights abuses. It is no consolation that this is a universal phenomenon. It is frequently reported in Afghanistan and Iraq. Nearer home, Sri Lanka is a prime example of this phenomenon. We can also see such cases in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.

Troops fighting insurgents at home run into twin problems – professional and cultural and this takes a toll on their performance. The soldier is trained for conventional warfare. He is taught to shoot to kill first, use overwhelming firepower, and destroy enemy defences to retain the initiative at all times. Military training has a high degree of regimentation. Everything is reduced to a drill. So a soldier's response under fire is reflexive rather than deliberate. In short, armies are trained to become killing machines of a conventional war. The soldier's training gives him an abounding faith in his weapon and in his skill to kill his foe. And the macho culture of armed forces encourages this phenomenon.

In 1989, while serving with the Indian Peace Keeping Force, I was attending a party in Colombo on the lawns of the Indian High Commission to celebrate Republic Day. The Pakistani naval adviser chatted me up when he learnt I was a senior staff officer of the IPKF. "Colonel, I believe you're having problems with employment of Madras Regiment units in Sri Lanka operations," he said. Clearly, he was needling me because I am Tamilian.

In 1965, Pakistan had made a clumsy propaganda effort to play up the so-called South-North divide among some of the South Indian prisoners of war. It boomeranged when the Pakistanis were shooed out by the jawans. In reality, the Madras Regiment fought with thorough professionalism during the Jaffna operations. So to reply to him was easy: "Commander, I don't know about your army, but I know our army. If I ask a squad of soldiers to open fire on the passing traffic on Mount Road (in Madras) they will do just that. They would not show any hesitation." This is the level of conditioning our soldiers have.

The soldier in counter-insurgency operations is supposed to take on the militant hiding among ordinary people without hurting others who are in the location. This is a Herculean task for the soldier because he has to overcome his professional training routine for conventional warfare. So the soldier has to be retrained in counter-insurgency warfare techniques before fighting insurgents. But retraining is not always possible when situations overtake planning – as happened in Sri Lanka.

Forces in Kashmir: Herculean task

Rotation of troops can partly reduce brutalization. In Jammu and Kashmir, the Army has raised Rashtriya Rifles battalions especially for fighting insurgency

In counter-insurgency, troops rarely confront the enemy face to face. The attacks are indirect attacks and the methods are unconventional. Troops exposed to such nerve-wracking experience over a long period develop a strong animal feeling of insecurity. During a confrontation, self-preservation becomes their sole priority, overtaking all other considerations. Their nerves are on edge and the use of force is instantaneous at the slightest suspicious move. In other words, they get brutalized in the process of fighting the insurgent in the midst of the population over a period of time. Often, those who order the use of the Army in a knee-jerk response in areas where insurgents thrive do not bother to understand this occupational hazard of the soldier.

The My Lai massacre in the Vietnam War in 1968 is a classic example of brutalization of forces. US Army soldiers massacred over 500 civilians, including women and children. In the trials that followed the massacre, the conscience of the world was touched. In his testimony, Private Dennis Bunning said, "I would say that most people in our company didn't consider the Vietnamese human... A guy would just grab one of the girls there and in one or two incidents they shot the girls when they got done." This statement explains the mindset that sets in among soldiers who feel insecure even in the midst of civilians in such circumstances. And the world of armies in action has only marginally improved.

Rotation of troops can partly reduce brutalization. In Jammu and Kashmir, the Army has raised Rashtriya Rifles battalions especially for fighting insurgency. Soldiers are not permanently posted to such units, they serve by rotation. But rotation of troops

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can only partly reduce the problem.

The typical Indian soldier comes from ruralia into the strange world of the armed forces. He also comes with a baggage of prejudices and perceptions of rural society. He hardly understands human rights because he has not experienced them first-hand in his conservative society. He sees the world in tones of black and white, right or wrong. The Army takes charge of his life 24x7 – it tells him not only how to shoot to kill, but also how to obey orders without question, dress and eat properly. The Army is his *mai-baap* (mother and father). And, unlike urban cynics, he still believes in old-world values like loyalty to the hand that feeds you.

The officers are no exception to this, though they might speak English and come from an urban middle class background (this variety is dwindling). They may grumble and whine but do what their superiors tell them with little consideration for other things, just like their soldiers.

Security forces living this schizophrenic existence in counter-insurgency theatres fail sometimes and succeed at other times. Either way, military operations make good copy because war makes news. If they fail, everybody bays for the blood of the soldier. The soldier has a difficult time understanding this kind of behaviour. Public expectations of the armed forces are very high because they are supposed to uphold the rule of law, justice, order and discipline. If we want the Army to live up to such expectations, other limbs of government and society have to show at least incremental improvement. Otherwise, the task may well be too big for the Army. g

Troops rarely confront the enemy face to face. The attacks are indirect. Exposed to such nerve-wracking experience, soldiers develop a strong animal feeling of insecurity

The writer is a retired Military Intelligence specialist associated with the South Asia Analysis Group

HAVE CONSPIRACIES CRACKED?

Delivery boys are prosecuted

by Vijay Sanghvi

In "The basics are fatally flawed" (*gfiles*, November 2008), Col R Hariharan has rightly made a distinction between acts of terrorism and insurgency as one is open while the other is screened. However, he then goes on to show he had evolved an intelligence network to deal with the situation he was confronted with as head of the network in Sri Lanka during the Indian Peace Keeping Operation in Sri Lanka.

He was dealing with a situation where the objective of insurgency was clear and stated. The Tamil Tigers were demanding autonomy which was nothing sort of secession of the territory they had identified as under their domination from Sri Lanka. The man who was the motivating force was known. The idea that was used to motivate thousands of young Tamilians was also well known. The targets were mostly rulers, be it politician, bureaucrat or a part of civilian or military law enforcement agency. If innocents were killed, it was incidental.

But what is happening in India is quite different. Blasts have occurred in many major cities during the last five months. The intensity has increased only now though the process began in 2001. The targets have been clearly chosen to terrorize the masses and thereby get at the political system. After each bomb attack, the organization by the name of Indian Mujaheedin has taken responsibility for the act but without delivering any specific message. It is generally presumed that it was an act of reprisal.

Earlier, no local boys were involved. In the attacks since July this year, the police claims to have caught over two dozen local boys, most of them highly educated, who are suspected of involvement in the blasts in Mumbai, Bangalore, Ahmedabad, Jaipur and then again in Delhi.

From the details given out by the police of different states, it is apparent that only those young men have been nabbed who acted as delivery boys in planting bombs. Some of them had even assembled these highly technical devices with timers. According to the police, the man who planned the attacks and orchestrated the operation is on the run. But the police version clearly indicates that he too had merely acted as the steward of the team of delivery boys, a figure that they knew and dealt with.

In the cases that the police of different states investigated in the past eight years, the only arrests made were of delivery boys. They have no clue as to the person who was the motivating force or what idea and arguments he employed to motivate these young men to be prepared to sacrifice their lives if the need arose for a cause they were being assigned. Money alone cannot be a motivating force as even the parents had no inkling.

Clearly, the person or persons who motivated these young men had persuasive charms and powerful arguments. The general perception is that it was

REALLY BEEN

d while the masterminds and kingpins remain elusive

Islamic terrorism. However, the religion does not sanction killing of innocents. It would not be an Islamic cause but certainly the Islamic religion that was used to exploit a sense of injustice. It does not matter if the sense of injustice was felt, perceived or imagined. It is the idea of injustice that seems to have motivated even the well educated for they showed no sense of modern rationality when they willingly became involved in the conspiracy without their families' knowledge. None was in desperate need of money for self or family that could have been a plausible motivator. Their strong sense of injustice made them easy to motivate.

Pervert is a strong word but it is apt to describe those who think nothing of targeting people who are in no way the cause of that injustice. They were ready to sacrifice the entire team of delivery boys. If the police caught some or all of them, it did not matter to the actual masterminds because there was a ready supply. One team would go out of action, another team would be chosen.

It is essential to reach the kingpin and not concentrate only on minions, as the police seems to have done. Even more surprising was the eagerness of senior police officials to share information with the media rather than keep it under wraps so

There seems to be unhealthy competition among the police of different states. They have also exposed their mindset. They have dealt with terrorism as they would with a routine double or triple murder case

that the investigation could be carried to the utmost. There seems to be unhealthy competition among the police of different states. They have also exposed their mindset. They have dealt with the act of terrorism as they would with a routine double or triple murder case. They appear satisfied with prosecution of delivery boys. After 15 years' investigation of the 1993 Bombay blasts, no one has a clue as to the real motivator. Fingers have been pointed at Dawood Ibrahim without a valid explanation as to why a known criminal activist would indulge in acts of reprisal for injustice to the community.

The whole country has seen the same exercise (of ritualistic responses) time and again. It does not matter that the Home Minister was a member of the Congress party or the Bharatiya Janata Party or believed in a different kind of secularism. Their responses are the same. At times one gets an eerie feeling that none of them understands the real gravity of the situation. g

Bhargava (left) with Governor Jamir

Award for Air-India's Bhargava

JITENDER Bhargava, then with Indian Airlines, once quizzed the chef of a Chennai-based five-star hotel that supplied food to the airlines, "Suppose the king of some country is flying with Indian Airlines, what would you do?" The chef replied that he would read up on the king and his food habits and prepare a delicious meal he would never forget.

"Well said! Every passenger is a king for me. So cook the best food for him," said Bhargava and, after that, no complaints were heard regarding the Chennai food supplier. The incident is a prime example of Bhargava's method of dealing with people. His communication skills have earned him the Communicator of the Decade Award from the Governor of Maharashtra, SC Jamir.

Bhargava is Executive Director, Corporate Communications, of Air-India, which now includes the former Indian Airlines. When Air-India wanted to withdraw ads as a cost-cutting measure, Bhargava used logic, data and transparency to convince the media representatives.

He joined Air-India in 1989 after having been head of corporate communications at Coal India, Kolkata for 12 years. Before that, he had worked with private sector companies – Goodyear India Ltd and Crompton Greaves – after starting his career as a journalist with the *Hindustan Times* in New Delhi. He is also co-Chairman of the Shipping & Aviation Committee of the Indian Merchants' Chamber.

Is a ban the best tool?

Is outlawing an organization the best solution or is it just another political gimmick indulged in by governments?

by Girish Nikam

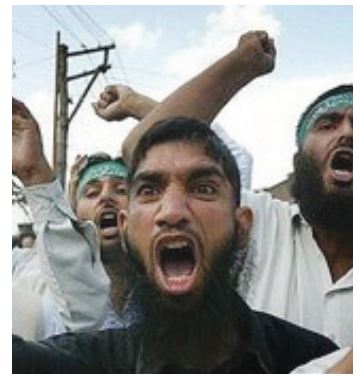
THE issue of the Bajrang Dal ban has become all the more controversial because of internal differences in the UPA government. National Security Adviser MK Narayanan has queered the pitch by advising against a ban. Some Cabinet Ministers are also not too keen. But there is equally strong sentiment in favour of it among Congress ministers, and especially among government allies like Lalu Prasad Yadav and Ram Vilas Paswan.

If Cabinet sources are to be believed, the ban is not yet in place only because of the need to create a watertight case, so that the move does not blow up in the government's face during the forthcoming election.

The government has apparently veered round to the idea of imposing the ban because of its supporters' argument that it would send the right message to minorities. It is also felt that the liberal Hindu or even a section of pro-BJP Hindus too would welcome the ban, as the Bajrangis are seen by them as the "embarrassment" former Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee once dubbed them.

As in all previous cases of bans on such organizations, the primary motivation of the government is political and aimed at bolstering its electoral prospects. When SIMI was banned during the NDA regime, the motivation was no different, though it was meant to appeal to a different set of vote banks.

There is no doubt that these organizations, be it SIMI or the Bajrang Dal, have flagrantly violated all Constitutional provisions and indulged in dangerous activities, sowing seeds of discord and promoting communal strife. Yet, in the past, bans have not stopped such organizations from pursuing their activities. The RSS was banned three times – after Mahatma Gandhi's assassination, during the Emergency, and after the Babri Masjid demolition. But it has only grown in size and spread every time it has been banned. Despite the ban on SIMI, we are regularly told by the police of various states as well as the Intelligence Bureau that it is very much active. Many recent terrorist strikes have been attributed to its members. It is believed that they have metamorphosed and now operate from outfits with different nomenclatures.



Dal and SIMI activists: two sides of a coin?

The Bajrang Dal, which is part of the Sangh Parivar and a youth wing of the VHP, claims it has a membership of 13 lakh out of which 8.5 lakh are active workers operating 2,500 *akhada*s (its equivalent of the RSS *shakha*s) across the country. But ask them if they have a record of membership. It has none. Its only website seems to have disappeared from cyber space. What can be achieved by imposing a ban on such an organization, which specializes in obfuscation and outright denial, except satisfying political expediency?

The recent fiasco concerning the ban on SIMI, when a Delhi High Court tribunal struck it down for want of adequate evidence to justify it, should serve as a warning signal to the government. Though the case is still pending in the apex court, doubts had been raised against its sustainability when the ban was imposed.

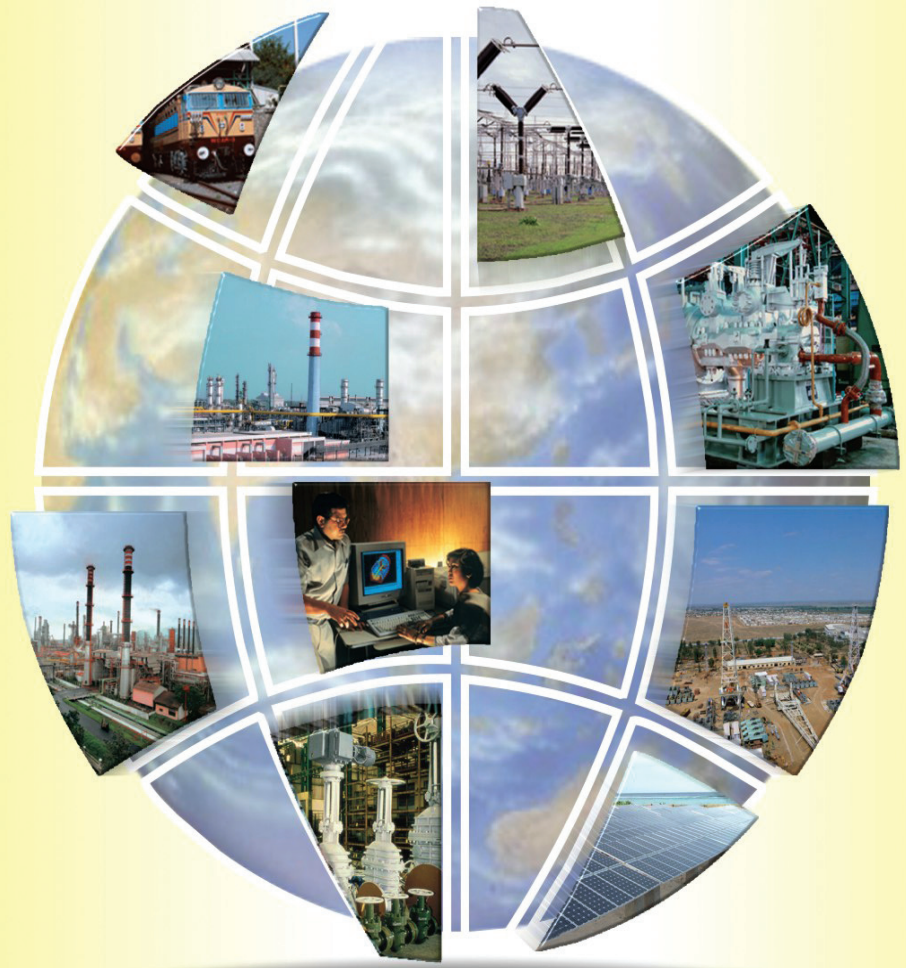
Though it is commonly known that the Bajrang Dal has been indulging in violence, the multi-faceted and obfuscating nature of the organization might just make it difficult to pin allegations. On the other hand, a ban might help it to gather momentum in a new *avatar*.

So does this mean that there is no deliverance from such dangerous outfits out to destroy the unity and integrity of this country? Certainly not. The primary reasons they have managed to survive and even thrive are political patronage and a consequent lack of political will in dealing with their communal activities with an iron hand; and, second, the support they receive from the misguided public.

It is therefore imperative not only for the government but also for political parties to deal with these primary reasons, instead of indulging in what essentially is a political gimmick. A ban is essentially a reactive measure, which all governments indulge in. A better governance tool would be proactive measures to tackle the menace of such organizations. g

The writer is a syndicated columnist and TV analyst

The RSS was banned three times – after Mahatma Gandhi's assassination, during the Emergency, and after the Babri Masjid demolition. But it has only grown in size and spread every time



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FOOT-DRAGGING

The draft legislation ignores children below six and above fourteen years of age

by Prabhat Kumar

The Bill

Ideally, every child should complete elementary education without any disparity under a common school system as was recommended by the Kothari Commission in 1966. In 2002, the Right to free Education was incorporated into the Constitution.

With the objective of putting into effect this right for all children in the age group of six to fourteen years, a Bill was drafted by a committee of Central Advisory Board of Education in 2005. It contains some of the following provisions:

- Children between the ages of 6 and 14 shall have the right to free education. (Clause 3)
- It will be the responsibility of the State that children should receive education of equitable quality conforming to the values enshrined in the Constitution. (Clause 5)
- A National Commission of Elementary Education will be set up to monitor the implementation of the Act, recommend corrective measures wherever necessary and perform other functions assigned to it. (Chapter VI)
- Competent Academic Authorities will prescribe curriculum and evaluation procedures. (Chapter V)
- No Non-state schools will be recognized unless the norms of the Schedule are fulfilled. (Clause 18)
- The Schedule to the Bill provides norms and standards for a school.
- The Government will ensure enrolment of every child of the age group in a neighbourhood school within three years. (Clause 3)
- It will be the responsibility of the parents or guardians of the children to enroll them in a school at the age of 6 years. (Clause 50)
- The appropriate government shall

SHARAD SAXENA

ADDITIONAL CONCERNS

IT is the first duty of the State to provide a school in every child's neighbourhood. The Secretary of School Education and Literacy has recently stated in an interview that the government has succeeded in providing a primary school for 97% of the children within 1 kilometer and an upper primary school for 90% of the children within 3 kilometers(see gfiles of August 2008). Certainly the task of providing neighbourhood schools to remaining children is not so daunting.

The justification for excluding schools of certain categories is not clear. The resulting possible duality of the educational system would militate against equality of all children at the elementary stage.

Also the reasons for doing away with public examinations altogether (Clause 30) is not clear. While annual examinations can be dispensed with, tests at the end of primary stage (Class V) and at the end of upper primary stage (Class VIII) are necessary to assess the learning levels of the children.

The introduction of School Management Committees (SMCs) is a welcome provision. Curiously, it applies only to state and aided schools but does not cover private unaided schools. It should be made applicable to all recognized schools irrespective of the nature of management. Besides, in the SMCs the representation of mother parents should be at least 50%.

AND FLAWS

and the responsibility of the State towards education remains ambivalent

SALIENT FEATURES

On 30.10.2008 the Union Cabinet accorded approval to 'The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Bill, 2008' and its likely introduction in Parliament in the current session.
It provides for:

(i) The right of children to free and compulsory education till completion of elementary education in a neighbourhood school. It clarifies that 'compulsory education' means obligation of the appropriate government to provide free elementary education and ensure compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education to every child in the 6-14 age group. It makes provisions for a non-admitted child to be admitted to an age-appropriate class.
(ii) It specifies the duties and responsibilities of appropriate governments, local authority and parents in providing free and compulsory education, and sharing of financial and other responsibilities between the Central and State Governments.
(iii) It lays down the norms and standards relating inter alia to Pupil-Teacher Ratios (PTRs), buildings and infrastructure, school working days, teacher working hours.
(iv) It provides for rational deployment of teachers by ensuring that the specified PTR is maintained for each school, rather than just as an average for the State or District or Block, thus ensuring that there is no urban-rural imbalance in teacher postings. It also provides for prohibition of deployment of teachers for non-educational work, other than decennial census, elections to local authority, state legislatures and parliament, and disaster relief.
(v) It provides for appointment of appropriately trained teachers, ie teachers with the requisite entry and academic qualifications.
(vi) It prohibits (i) physical punishment and mental harassment, (ii) screening procedures for admission of children, (iii) capitation fees, (iv) private tuition by teachers, **(v)** running of schools without recognition.
(vii) It provides for the following penalties:
a. For charging capitation fee – fine up to 10 times the capitation fee charged,
b. For resorting to screening during admission – Rs 25,000 for first contravention; Rs 50,000 for each subsequent contravention.
c. For running a school without recognition – fine up to Rs 1 lakh, and in case of continuing contravention Rs 10,000 for each day during which the contravention continues.
(viii) It provides for development of curriculum in consonance with the values enshrined in the Constitution, and which would ensure the all-round development of the child, building on the child's knowledge, potentiality and talent and making the child free of fear, trauma and anxiety through a system of child-friendly and child-centred learning.
(ix) It provides for protection and monitoring of the child's right to free and compulsory education and redressal of grievances by the National and State Commissions for Protection of Child Rights, which shall have the powers of a civil court.
endeavour to provide for pre-school education to children below 6 years. (Clause 7)

THE SHORTCOMINGS

Initially Article 45 of the Constitution stated that the State would endeavour to provide free and compulsory education for all children below 14 years. Though it was one of the Directive Principles of State Policy, in the Unnikrishnan vs. Government of Andhra Pradesh case, the Supreme Court said that Article 45 was a legal source for claim to education.

The Secretary of the concerned department of the Government of India says that he has been working on the Right to Education Bill for the last six months and that it may be tabled in Parliament very soon.

It is somewhat surprising that while the 2005 draft was placed in the public domain, the amended draft is kept under covers till it is tabled in Parliament. It is suspected that some radical changes have been effected in the earlier draft. The amended draft of the Bill was recently considered by the Union Cabinet and referred to a Group of Ministers.

To recall, the Bill has been hanging fire for the last three years. And if one counts from the 86th Amendment of the Constitution, which enshrined the right in the first place but left it to be notified, it is more than six years that millions of children in the country have waited to be enrolled in school.

Those who were six years old at that time may not get the benefit of the right as they will very soon cross the age of 14 years, the upper limit of the definition of "child" in the Bill.

The 2005 draft merely speaks of recognition of private schools. It does not mention any regulation of non-state schools on the lines of state and aided schools. On the con-

trary, it tends to support the privatization of primary education. The State is seen as partly withdrawing from its responsibility of providing elementary education as is its duty under the Constitution.

Since early childhood care and education (ECCE) is not being provided to all the children of the country (it is being provided to almost 50%) and the rest of the children are left to be covered by either NGOs or the private sector, it should be covered by including all the eligible children. This is the obligation flowing from the 86th Amendment of the Constitution to acknowledge the fundamental right of all children between the ages of six and fourteen years.

To avoid disparity in education a common school system should be introduced. At the moment, there are different types of schools. There is no commonality of curricula or system of teaching. The private unaided schools are not regulated in the same manner as the government schools are. Way back in 1966, the Kothari Commission had recommended the Common School System. That recommendation has neither been accepted nor rejected by successive governments in the last four decades.

I am not aware whether CABE did examine the pros and cons of introducing a common School System during deliberation on operationalizing the Right to Education.

There are two identifiable objectives of the Right to Education. The first objective obviously is providing free access to educational facilities to every eligible child without any discrimination of race, class, caste, gender, region or religion. It is a precondition for full realization of the right. As an extension of this, the child should complete 8 years' education without dropping out of school.

The second objective, and perhaps more important than the first, is the quality of education imparted. It is a widely known fact that many children, who have passed class 5, cannot read or write. So in my view, the quality of education is as important as retaining the child in school.

The Bill does make a mention of "equitable quality" of education. According to clause 2 (o) of the draft Bill, the equitable quality in relation to elementary education is defined as: "Providing all children opportunities of access to, participation in, and completion of elementary education in accordance with the provisions of this Act."

Therefore, the definition of quality education is restricted to access and retention of the child for a stipulated period of time. The quality of education and learning levels cannot be ensured unless measurable and monitorable indicators of quality education are in place. In the Bill there should be national standard of quality education applicable to all schools with clear monitorable indicators. There are no indicators that can be monitored in an empirical way.

Schools should not be allowed to discriminate between groups or to perpetuate inequality. Non-discrimination in education should be achieved at once.

The objective of "equitable quality" of education should be linked with culturally appropriate form and content. It is the duty of the state to ensure that all schools conform to the same minimum standard criteria. The language of instruction should also be acceptable to the students. Besides, it should encourage non-violent methods of school discipline.

DELIBERATE, concrete and targeted steps should be taken to achieve the target, when so much delay has already been made. In fact, since 2002 when the Right to Education was placed in the Constitution, the Central and State Governments should have made efforts to set up schools in every habitat of the country and to equip them with necessary materials and teachers.

According to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) of 1966, there are several elements which are essential for schools to function properly – buildings, sanitation, drinking water, trained teachers, teaching materials, library, and computers etc.

FIRST PRINCIPLES

The right to education is a fundamental human right. Every individual, irrespective of race, gender, nationality, ethnic or social origin, religion or political preference, age or disability, is entitled to a free elementary education. This right is explicitly stated in the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted in 1948:
"Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit. ..." (Article 26)
The Declaration further states that:
"... Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among ... racial or religious groups. ...".
It is universally recognized that there is a direct correlation between lack of education and poverty. In fact, the UN High Commissioner of Human Rights has been working on the right to development, and the right to education along with right to food and right to health forms an essential component of the right to development.

The issue has been hanging fire for the last six years and millions of children in the country have waited for their right to be enrolled in school

The Bill is not as comprehensive as it could have been. It ignores children below six and above fourteen years of age and the responsibility of the States

SHARAD SAXENA

WORSENING RATIO

THE number of primary schools increased from 2,10,000 in 1950-51 to 6,42,000 in 1999-2000. The number of upper primary schools increased from 13,600 in 1950-51 to 1,98,000 in 1999-2000. It is estimated that about 90% of the habitations have physical availability of a primary school within a distance of one kilometer.

The number of teachers increased from 6,34,000 in 1950-51 to more than 3.2 million in 1999-2000. Among them, 35% are female teachers. But the teacher-pupil ratio has worsened from 1:24 to 1:43 in primary schools and from 1:20 to 1:38 in upper primary schools.

In the Act, there should be penal clauses like the Right to Information Act, 2005 for failure to take targeted and concrete steps for realization of the right to education, failure to provide minimum educational standards and so on. Bad quality of teaching and failure to conform to minimum standards should also be actionable under the Act.

Education is a subject in the Concurrent List and therefore a shared responsibility of the Central and State Governments. The views of the state governments should be taken into consideration while finalizing the Bill.

The Right to Education Bill is undoubtedly welcome despite the long delay in its introduction. However, it is still not as comprehensive as it could have been. It ignores children below six and above fourteen years of age and the responsibility of the State towards education remains ambivalent. g

The author is a former Cabinet Secretary

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The Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Limited
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First iron ore long distance slurry pumping operation in Asia, with a pipeline spanning 67 kilometers
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Our social obligations:
Financial assistance for the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Bhavan and Samudhaya Bhavans at various socially and economically backward areas
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Borewell and water supply for Samse Village and Nellibeedu Village
Infrastructure development in the form of roads across the area and bridges over the river Bhadra
Development and Maintenance of the Kendriya Vidyalaya.
Our environmental concerns:
Plantation of 8.5 million saplings covering 45 different species
Development of Sanjeevani Vana, a lush heaven on earth
Construction of the Lakya dam to prevent silts entering the River Bhadra
Environmental studies undertaken in collaboration with various universities
Restoration of near extinct plant species in the area
Ferns and grass planting in mine abandoned area
Numerous awards for environment protection measures including the FIMI Environment Award 2005
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THE MALIGNANCY SPREADS

Below-poverty line households are being extorted for basic services

by MG DEVASAHAYAM

GANDHI had seen it through and therefore cautioned: "Corruption and hypocrisy ought not to be inevitable products of democracy, as they undoubtedly are today." Six decades later these two venalities have become not only an inevitable but integral part of democracy and governance from top to bottom!

At the top, the typical example is the US-India deal, hyped and celebrated with messages like "Singh is King". Uncle Sam did not dupe India, as suggested by Niranjan Desai (*gfiles*, October 2008). To be fair to the Americans, they have been speaking the truth. President Bush put it in writing to the US Congress that fuel supply rights were only political commitments and not legally binding. Condoleezza Rice warned of serious consequences and automatic cut-off should New Delhi ever feel the need to test again. The American Ambassador admitted that US firms may not be able to supply critical equipment because law and guidelines of US regulatory commission prohibit this.

Even Ashley Tellis, the Indian-American strategist and the prime mover of the 123 Agreement, has stated that it is the "US domestic laws that would define the boundaries of the N-Deal" ie the Hyde Act with its fuel-killer provisions that could make India "nuke impotent" instead of ending its "nuclear apartheid".

It is India's politico-diplomatic-media coterie that has deceived and duped Indians. Their spin of India getting on to the nuclear high-table and achieving "energy security" is just so much hogwash. As a feeble straw to sustain this falsehood, the ruling establishment is clinging on to the toothless "signing statement" of the outgoing US President that the legislation "does not change the fuel assurance commitments made to India in the 123 agreement."

The core motive for the deal is windfall business. On its signing, Ron Somers, president of the US-India Business Council, said: "We are looking at $150 billion of business in the nuclear industry alone." This colossal amount, going out of India's public and private coffers, would merely cater to 6-7 per cent of the country's energy needs in 30 years. Suggesting that this would "light up India's huts" and provide energy security is the pinnacle of hypocrisy.

In 2007 one-third of BPL households paid Rs 9,000 million as bribe for availing of Public Distribution System, hospital services, school education, electricity and water supply

The corruption of the deal is reflected in India (rank 85) sinking lower than China (rank 72) on a corruption scale devised by Transparency International, compared to last year, when the two countries were on a par. Corruption Perception Index-2008 puts India's integrity score at 3.4 as against 3.6 of China.

Admiral Tahiliani, the Country Chairman of TI, is of the view that "bundles of currency notes displayed in Parliament during the confidence vote debate (to secure the deal) in July could have influenced such an assessment".

If this is at the top, how could things be different at the bottom where the governance mechanism has become blatantly extortionist? Recently published TI and Centre for Media Studies report says that one-third of people living below the poverty line paid bribes to access healthcare, education and water, among other basic facilities. It dubs the police force as the most corrupt among the services surveyed.

In 2007 one-third of BPL households paid Rs 9,000 million as bribes for availing of one or more of the 11 public services covered in the survey. The services include Public Distribution System, Hospital Service, School Education, electricity and water supply. Need-based services included land records and registration, forest, housing, banking and police service.

Of the 5.6 million BPL households that interacted with the police in 2007, a whopping 2.5 million paid Rs 2,150 million as bribe for some work or the other and most of them went to the police station for simple registration of a complaint, it said. Land records and registration services comes second in terms of monetary extortion as nearly 3.5 million BPL households paid Rs 1,224 million in bribes.

Even the government's flagship NREGA Scheme has not been spared. Over 9 lakh BPL families had to pay bribes to the tune of Rs 71.5 million to avail of the benefits of the scheme. Half of the BPL families had to pay bribes for getting them registered for work. About 14 per cent of the poor either paid bribes or used a "contact" to get the benefits of NREGA. This, despite the much-trumpeted "social audits".

UNDP estimates that corruption robs India a quarter of its GDP growth!

Such extortion and corruption, severely impacting justice, dignity and lives of the poor and the paupers of native Bharat, is taking place under the direct watch of IAS and IPS officials. Instead of rooting out such venality in governance, these worthies are seeking to corner all perks and cavort with the rich and wealthy of globalized India. This indeed is real-time hypocrisy.

The deadly concoction of corruption and hypocrisy is a negation of all that the Mahatma stood for. g

ganga das

From farming to IAS field work

A Dalit farmer's son traces his rise through the ranks

SHARAD SAXENA

I was born in Kandhla, Muzzaffarnagar, UP, in a small Dalit farmer's family. My father wanted all his sons and daughters to be educated despite the total lack of motivation. I was mediocre in studies. Having graduated in Kandhla, I moved to Meerut University for an MCom degree. My father then sent me to do LLB from Allahabad University. Allahabad was a sea change. The pure academic atmosphere impressed and motivated me to study hard and I made up my mind to appear for the civil services exam. After completing LLB, I joined the Government of India in 1963 as an assistant, but kept preparing for the civil services exam. I qualified and was selected as an IPS officer. A childhood memory of having seen an influential policeman in a rural area returned to delight me. While I was still undergoing training, I got the news of my selection in the IAS. It took me five years – from 1963 to 1968 – to become an IAS officer.

I was married eight years before joining as an IAS officer in accordance with the tradition prevalent in our area. I also used to work in my fields. Thus, I have risen in the government from the ranks. I was allotted the UT cadre and posted in Rampur for training. I learnt district functioning with fascinated interest. Being from a rural background, I always wanted to know how *patwari*s and *tehsildar*s functioned.

After training, I was posted as Sub-Divisional Magistrate in Tripura. In 1970, the turmoil in East Pakistan started. When refugees started pouring into Tripura in 1971, I was posted in north Tripura. It was a massive task to make arrangements for approximately seven lakh refugees. I was supposed to look after 2.5 lakh of them. I had to coordinate everything within 15 days. I was a helping hand for Gen AS Arora, who was in charge of planning. I vividly recall that the BSF came first and then the military. Welfare activities were started through the Army Officers' Wives Association.

It was my first experience of how a war is fought and how tough the military was. The most difficult job we completed peacefully was to send the refugees back after the war was over.

In 1972 Tripura became a state and Baleshwar Prasad was made Lt-Governor. I returned to Delhi and joined the Delhi Development Authority as Deputy Commissioner. In 1974, I joined the Agriculture Ministry. Once, my Secretary called to say he was posting me as Private Secretary to the Minister of State, Budh Priya Maurya. He probably thought that my being a Dalit would suit the Minister. When I asked him to post me in some other department, he said it was a challenging job. I was sad at the appointment.

However, it was yet another new experience for me. Important leaders would sit outside his office. Maurya was arrogant and visitors invariably enquired about his mood before entering his room. He trusted me so much that he always consulted me before signing any important document. He did not allow me to join any other department until his stint was over. After the Congress lost the next election, I was appointed Registrar, Cooperative Societies.

I served the government for 34 years and seven months. The most satisfying part of my career was the posting in Tripura and then as Commissioner, Municipal Corporation of Delhi on August 8, 1988. It was only because of the firm decision taken by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi that I could become Commissioner. My earlier postings in MCD as Deputy Commissioner (Taxes, Education, Horticulture) came in handy.

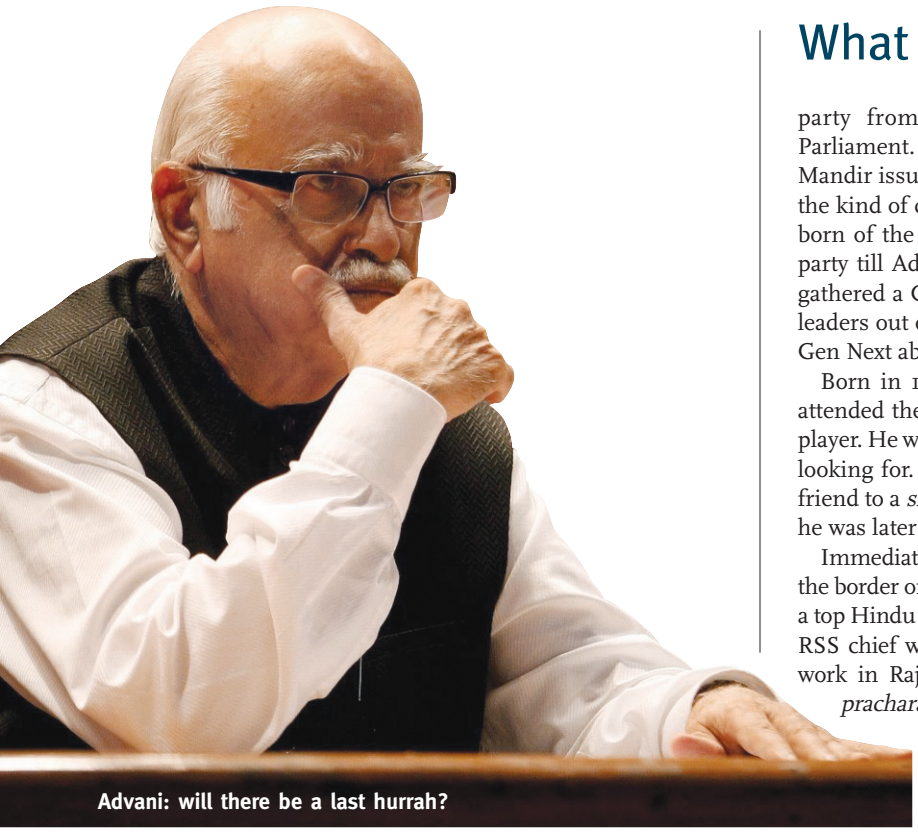
Soon after taking over as Commissioner, gastro enteritis was reported in resettlement colonies. The Central Government was worried. I put all possible staff and machinery on the job. Contaminated water was found to be the culprit. Hand pumps installed along with drainage lines had polluted the ground water. My rural background helped me control the epidemic fast and the job was commended by everyone.

Today we lack good leaders who command the respect and trust of the common man. Once, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru stood up to address an unruly public meeting. The crowd was not under control. Nehru went down from the stage into the crowd and told it to behave. He could do it as the crowd loved and trusted him. Can you name a single leader today who can dare do such a thing?

Collectors would be like elder brothers and treat citizens like family members and even host lunches for them at home

The civil service trains one to be disciplined and it allows one to interact with different strata of society. Sadly, now it lacks the earlier spirit. Then, Collectors would be like elder brothers and treat citizens like family members and even host lunches for them at home. This is no more the practice in the changed atmosphere today. There is poor or total lack of social interaction. The relaxed and stress-free working environment has given way to an unduly stressed scenario. g

The spokes within the



Advani: will there be a last hurrah?

What ails Advani? Why is he for

by S Subramaniam

Who, born for the universe, narrow'd his mind,
And to party gave up what was meant for mankind.
—Oliver Goldsmith, *Retaliation*

ONE question that Lal Kishenchand Advani (his original name, yes, though he has for years used Krishna instead) cannot for the life of him answer is why, whenever he sets out to become PM, someone always sneezes. The last time he mounted the *rath* and traversed the country, braving the heat and dust, he thought the journey would culminate in the coveted chair. But Atal Behari Vajpayee beat him to it. Then he had to get a good conduct certificate from Jhandewalan to become Deputy PM.

Why is Advani perpetually the PM-in-waiting? Every time elections are imminent, this question shadows the political landscape of India and Advani inevitably ends up as the most successful "also ran".

Of the select post-Nehru generation, Advani is the only non-Congress leader who has been around for over 40 years – besides Vajpayee, that is. But it was Advani who brought the party from the confines of the Hubli municipality to Parliament. It was he who galvanized the cadre on the Ram Mandir issue. It was he who explained Hindutva in English to the kind of crowd that would applaud only in Hindi. The BJP, born of the Jan Sangh genie, was considered a north Indian party till Advani took it down south. And it was Advani who gathered a Gen Next group of young party workers and made leaders out of them. But it was Vajpayee who became PM and Gen Next abandoned Advani to a lonely trail.

Born in 1927 in Karachi in a middle-class family, Advani attended the best Mission school and was a good table tennis player. He would have been the pack leader his school head was looking for. But his life changed the day he accompanied his friend to a *shakha*. He was instantly drawn to the ideology that he was later to identify as his life's mission.

Immediately after Partition, he came to India only to recross the border on an RSS mission – a jailbreak in Karachi jail to free a top Hindu leader. This daring feat earned him proximity to the RSS chief who appointed him in charge of the organization's work in Rajasthan. He was probably the first and only RSS *pracharak* at the time who spoke and wrote in English. As an offshoot of this, he landed in Delhi to report to his one-time senior, KR Malkani, who was then the editor of the RSS weekly, *Organiser*, ostensibly to write a column on films – a lifelong passion. It was from here that he moved more strongly into politics. The irony is that today even the RSS questions his dream to become PM.

In the firmament of globalized politics, one would think local issues are unimportant. But it was Advani who put Hindutva at the centrestage of Indian politics after his old party, Jan Sangh, became the BJP. It should have been a smooth journey for the Jan Sangh with a ready road map. But the business of politics is infamous for not charting planned routes. Post-Emergency, all political parties were in a state of flux and the "lamp" was extinguished to merge with the Janata Party under the leadership of Jayaprakash Narayan. But Nanaji Deshmukh was ruling

Advani was the bridge between the Vajpayee circus and the RSS, and faced brickbats from Thengadi's Swadeshi Jagaran Manch and Singhal's Bajrang Dal who had once tattooed Advani's portrait on their foreheads

wheels of his chariot

ever the PM-in-waiting?

the roost and the stalwarts but for Advani. The dual membership issue triggered a split. The Jan Sangh component of the Janata Party walked out and formed the BJP, this time under the leadership of veteran Vajpayee who managed to keep Hindutva at bay. The BJP was reduced to a two-member party in Parliament. In 1986, Advani became party president at the conclave in Mumbai while Vajpayee was writing poems in his backyard, brooding over his defeat in Gwalior.

You can't adopt politics as a profession and remain honest, wrote Louis McHenry Howe. But VP Singh was out to prove this wrong and chose Advani as his ally. When Advani would enter Parliament, a cry would rise from the treasury benches, "The real PM has come". But soon Vishwanath Pratap showed his true colours and rode the Mandal *rath*, prompting Advani to mount the Ram *rath*. And the BJP was back to its moorings, anchored by the man who always played second fiddle while secretly aspiring to be at the top.

SHARAD SAXENA

With Vajpayee: garlanded but still second fiddle

FUELLED by ambition and armed with ideology, aided by Young Turks and energized by the RSS and Bajrang Dal, Advani became the messiah the Sangh Parivar had been looking for. What appeared as a pair of horns on his head to Advani's detractors, shone as a halo for the Sangh Parivar. The demolition of the Babri Masjid was the last nail in the coffin of secular credentials of the party that still swears by Gandhian socialism on its membership slips. After a long spell of lame-duck PMs, the BJP stormed Parliament with the right numbers.

And then, Vajpayee – who had retired to writing poems and amusing his few visitors – woke up and was escorted to Race Course Road by RSS chief Rajju Bhaiya. The latter was a Thakur said to be close to the Bhondsi Baba, Thakur Chandrashekar, an acolyte of Vajpayee and PV Narasimha Rao. And, while Advani sulked, the allies wondered how a Hindutva fanatic could aspire for their support as PM after slinging mud at the *rathyatra* which catapulted the BJP to power.

He is now taking up cudgels for a sadhvi accused of terrorism, supping with the Bajrang Dal and cobbling together a coalition. He is again putting his team together, albeit with turncoats

For the next six years, Advani was the bridge between the Vajpayee circus and the RSS. He faced brickbats from various quarters – from Dattopant Thengadi's Swadeshi Jagaran Manch to Ashok Singhal's Bajrang Dal. These were the very people who a year earlier had tattooed Advani's portrait on their foreheads. The BJP lost its ideological moorings, donned the mantle of secularism and bathed in the borrowed glory of Shining India. Sensing the ground slip from under its feet, the party pressed the panic button and called for early elections, only to bite the dust.

Now Advani is back on duty – touring the country, taking up the cudgels for a sadhvi accused of terrorism, supping with the Bajrang Dal and cobbling together a coalition. He is again putting his team together, albeit with the same turncoats – Sudheendra Kulkarni, Anant Kumar, Arun Jaitley and Venkaiah Naidu. Does he have a choice? His "social engineer", Govindacharya, is now his *bete noir*; economics is Greek and Latin to him; the Jinnah ghost is haunting him; and the moneybags are signalling for the new mahajan. Yet, with the finishing line so close, the million-dollar question of Advani's life is once again foremost – why Advani as Prime Minister? g

Abolish the

Notwithstanding the high-sounding taxonomy, the

BY MAJ-GEN. MRINAL SUMAN

ONE of the fundamental principles of management of a mission-oriented organization like the military is that authority delegated must match the responsibility assigned. Many tend to confuse power with authority. Whereas power refers to the ability to achieve certain ends, authority refers to a claim of legitimacy, justification and right to exercise that power. Therefore, grant of unambiguous authority is a prerequisite before any executive can be held answerable for the achievement of assigned objectives. Such delegation of authority must cover all resources, ie human, material and financial. At the same time, accountability suggests retribution for unfulfilled trust or violated obligation.

The military has a very well-structured command hierarchy. Every executive is fully aware of his responsibility and has been given the necessary powers. However, financial powers delegated to him can be exercised only with the concurrence of the designated Defence Finance officials. Every service organization is wedged between two Defence Finance functionaries – Integrated Financial Adviser (IFA) and Controller of Defence Accounts (CDA). The primary role of IFA is to counsel executives as regards financial prudence to prevent irregularities to safeguard the government's interests. CDA, on the other hand, handles functions related to budgeting, accounting, payments and internal audit. It also carries out Performance Audit and Super Review of Accounts of major units. Whereas the institution of CDA has been in existence for long, the concept of IFA is of comparatively recent origin.

Notwithstanding the high-sounding taxonomy, the IFA is incapable of rendering any financial advice. Financial advice is generally defined as well-considered economic counsel that offers multiple options to the decision-maker with cost implications duly spelt out. The IFA is neither educationally qualified (many do not know even elementary economics) nor trained (no training in defence economics or military matters is ever imparted to them) to provide any worthwhile financial advice. Many see their creation as a ploy to create additional appointments for the cadre.

Retired soldiers protest against the Pay Commission: ill-served by bureaucracy

Lack of accountability

It is claimed that the IFA has been co-located to ensure that executives take financially prudent decisions as every proposal gets vetted at the outset to ascertain that the proposed expenditure is in consonance with the rules. Executives are thus bound to act on the advice of the IFA. However, if any financial irregularities or omissions are noticed later, the IFA disowns any responsibility under the plea that decision-making is the prerogative of the executives. This is untenable logic.

If the IFA has been positioned as an expert and if its advice is binding, no executive can be held responsible for any act of omission or commission. The onus should be totally on IFA for rendering flawed advice. The position of an executive is most unenviable. He cannot go against the counsel of his IFA. On the other hand, if he follows IFA advice, he is held responsible if any mistake comes to light later. The IFA declines to attend courts of inquiry proceedings, washing its hands of all faulty transactions, though done at its behest. Unfairly, executives are left to fend for themselves.

Usurping of executive powers

Over a period of time, the IFA has acquired overriding powers by usurping executive functions without any answerability. It has taken upon itself to scrutinize technical aspects of proposals as well, a role which is totally outside its domain or competence. Some years ago, Border Roads Organization (BRO) faced immense difficulties in achieving assigned targets due to the intransigence of an IFA staffer who insisted on checking technical aspects of every proposal, though well beyond his competence. He wanted to know why the proposed thickness of a road surface was 35 cm and why 25 cm would be inadequate. Soon he real-

The attitude of Defence Finance functionaries towards executives is always patronizing and haughty. They see themselves as granters of favours

behemoth

IFA is incapable of rendering any financial advice

SHARAD SAXENA

ized that his office could not even comprehend technical details and requested BRO to lend him some technical officials. He thus usurped the powers of BRO and assumed excessive control of the whole organization. He was commonly referred to as the Big Boss.

Exploitative approach

A senior Defence Finance officer used to often compare his cadre with orchids. "We look pretty but we thrive on the very organization we are detailed to serve," was his common refrain. In one case, when a proposal to purchase staff cars was put up to IFA for his concurrence, he withheld concurrence on one pretext or the other till he was assured that the first car would be put at his disposal. It is common knowledge that every proposal for computers/laptops has to include their requirement to get through, thereby putting additional load on the financial resources of the organization.

Such an approach also has an adverse effect on the standing and reputation of Defence Finance officials. They enjoy little respect in the organization, seen as freeloaders who have to be tolerated.

Lack of integrated functioning

Defence Finance functionaries never identify themselves with the organization they are supporting. They are concerned neither with the performance of the organization nor the wellbeing of troops. The IFA can stay proposals for months together without any answerability. One functionary made lakhs of troops in a field area go without fresh meat as he declined to accord concurrence. As the service officers are intimately concerned with mission accomplishment and welfare of their troops, it is a common sight to see them pleading with Defence Finance officials to further their cases.

An interesting aspect of CDA functioning is performance audit under which it reviews the performance of selected units. It is totally unjustified. The CDA is part of the organization and its own working has a major influence on the overall performance of the organization. Therefore, it is ethically incorrect for it to assume the role of an examining authority. Many consider this a ploy to keep units under its thumbs. An adverse performance audit report can prove a big irritant and the unit gets hard-pressed to explain all observations, however innocuous and irrelevant.

Condescending attitude

The attitude of Defence Finance functionaries towards executives is always patronizing and haughty. They come to see themselves as granters of favours and not joint partners. They get more involved in comparing pay scales to draw equations with service officers rather than on achieving organizational goals. Rank equivalency seems to have become an obsession with most of them. While attending a National Defence College course, one officer made a laughing stock of himself by frequently quoting his pay scale to claim seniority over military attendees.

The way ahead

While discussing the indifferent attitude of Defence Finance officials, a senior bureaucrat once said that IDAS officers suffer from acute inferiority complex vis-à-vis IAS officers. "Whereas IAS is at the top of the civil services list, IDAS appears in a much lower slot. Having failed to qualify for IAS, they have to settle for IDAS and are generally a demoralized lot. It is only after joining the service that they become aware of the power they wield through the purse strings," he added. Another bureaucrat said, "It is IDAS that calls the shots. IAS officers may pretend to be the bosses but they know they can't move an inch unless allowed by IDAS."

The IFA was introduced to reduce delays in obtaining financial concurrence by positioning and co-locating Defence Finance functionaries with major defence organizations. Sadly, the concept has degenerated into an alternative power centre with concomitant problems. They wield overriding authority but are not held accountable at all. Similarly, CDA, though part of the organization, assumes the role of assessor of performance. The whole arrangement is totally unfair to executives. No wonder they view IFA and CDA as impediments rather than help.

As the IFA system has failed to deliver, it should be abolished. Rather than burdening organizations unnecessarily, we should revert to the earlier system. Moreover, financial advisers at all levels must be accountable for advice rendered. The concept of performance audit by the CDA is the antithesis of collective responsibility and must be done away with. Finally, a code of ethics should be evolved to ensure that Defence Finance functions with its own resources. This single step will help redeem their standing. g

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birthdays

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For the complete list, see www.indianbuzz.com

TRACKING

For a complete list of appointments & retirements, see www.indianbuzz.com

SUJIT BANERJEE
The 1972-batch IAS officer of the Uttar Pradesh cadre has taken over as Tourism Secretary in the Government of India.

N GOKULRAM
The 1974-batch IAS officer of the Karnataka cadre has been appointed Secretary, Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying.

S JALAJA
The 1974-batch IAS officer of the Bihar cadre has become Secretary of AYUSH in the Government of India.

NR DAS
The 1973-batch IPS officer of the West Bengal cadre has taken over as Director General of the Central Industrial Security Force.

MANOJ BHARATI
The 1988-batch IFS officer has taken over as Joint Secretary (EG&IT) in the Ministry of External Affairs.

RAJIV SHARMA
The 1993-batch IDAS officer has joined the Indian Meteorological Department as Deputy Director General (Administration & Stores).

RANJIT SINHA
The1974-batch IPS officer of the Bihar cadre is now Director General, Railway Protection Force, Ministry of Railways.

ANUP K PUJARI
The 1980-batch IAS officer of the Karnataka cadre has been posted as Secretary in the Economic Advisory Council of the Prime Minister.

ALOK BHATNAGAR
The 1978-batch CSS officer has joined the Central Vigilance Commission as Additional Secretary.

DEEPAK KUMAR PANWAR
The 1974-batch IAS officer of the Andhra Pradesh cadre has been appointed Chairman-cum-Managing Director of the Food Corporation of India.

DILSHER SINGH KALHA
The 1977-batch IAS officer of the Punjab cadre has become Adviser in the Planning Commission.

GEETA RAM
The 1974-batch CSS officer is now Joint Secretary in the Department of Personnel & Training, Government of India.

SUSHIL CHANDRA
The 1983-batch IRSME officer has been appointed Chief Vigilance Officer in the Nuclear Power Corporation of India.

SATISH MEHTA
The 1983-batch IFS officer has become Joint Secretary (North) in the Ministry of External Affairs.

ARVIND MAYARAM
The 1978-batch IAS officer of the Rajasthan cadre has joined the Rural Development Ministry as Additional Secretary and Financial Adviser.

CHAMAN KUMAR
The 1978-batch IAS officer of the Gujarat cadre is now Additional Secretary and Financial Adviser in the Department of Agricultural Research & Education.

VIJAY CHIBBAR
The 1978-batch IAS officer of the Manipur-Tripura cadre is now Additional Secretary and Financial Adviser in the Ministry of Shipping.

AK RANA
The 1980-batch IFS officer of the Manipur-Tripura cadre has been posted as Regional Chief Conservator of Forest at Bhubaneswar.

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Moving On: ias and ips officers retiring in December 2008

ASSAM-MEGHALAYA
Chandra K Das (1975)

GUJARAT
Chandra Sanehi (1981)

HARYANA
Anil Razdan (1973)

HIMACHAL PRADESH
TD Negi (1991)

KARNATAKA
R Viswanathan (1971)

KERALA
Romanus Horo (1979)

MADHYA PRADESH
Rekha Bhargava (1973)

MAHARASHTRA
Satish Tripathi (1972)

MANIPUR-TRIPURA
Rakesh (1972)

ORISSA
SP Mishra (1995)

PUNJAB
KBS Sidhu (1995)

RAJASTHAN
Karni Rathore (1987)

UTTAR PRADESH
Chandra K Sharma (1971)

WEST BENGAL
Amit Kiran Deb (1971)

ips

AGMUT
UK Katna (1974)

ASSAM-MEGHALAYA
KC Reddy (1974)

BIHAR
Satyendra P Singh (1991)

HIMACHAL PRADESH
GC Kaushal (1977)

ORISSA
RK Dash (1988)

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TO OUR READERS

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT TO SERVE YOU BETTER

Your unique magazine has now been around for just over a year. This was a testing period for our new venture supported by an initial working capital from professional journalists. From the enthusiastic responses we have been receiving we know we have passed with flying colours. Reader support has been overwhelming and for that we extend our deepest gratitude.

Nonetheless, because of the stringent production and newsgathering standards we have maintained, we have been absorbing significant losses. We fully anticipated them. But, thanks to our readers' patronage and loyalty, we have been able to build a quality brand that began to get advertising support from the third month after we commenced production. This, however, has been less than we were expecting in order to upscale our product and to give it better readability, visuals, and visibility.

We have decided, however, to expand the scope of our coverage in order to include areas such as IRS, Postal Service, Indian Defence Accounts Services, Railways, allied services, and more news from the states by increasing the pages and strengthening our team so that our readers will continue to receive exclusive, high-quality information that is not available to them through any other channel.

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YAADON KI BARAAT

An ex-Doordarshan director's sentimental golden oldies journey

by VINOD KAPOOR

MILLIONS still get mesmerized by the mellifluous renderings bequeathed by Mohammad Rafi. I am lucky to have been part of the golden era of Hindi film music, which still captivates listeners with its blending of soulful expression, composition, and range and quality of singers. There were no regular film events, nothing like the plethora of awards ceremonies seen now and television had not made its advent. Despite the limited coverage provided by radio, musicians could sway a nation with their dulcet tones.

I recall most vividly a Ghalib function at the National Stadium, Delhi in the late 1960s. The film industry was present in full force. I got an opportunity to go backstage and see up close all the stars of those times. But, as a music buff, I was more enthralled by the composers and singers. It was a treat to see Madan Mohan, Shankar-Jaikishan, Roshan and Naushad Saheb mingling and preparing to perform. Ameen Sayani, the effervescent MC, called for Shankar Jaikishan followed by Mohammad Rafi. And it was at this unforgettable performance that I heard him sing *Badan pe sitare lapete hue...* followed by *Jaane chaman, shola badan* accompanied by Usha Khanna. Among the singers was Mala Sinha. Few knew she was an accomplished singer! Much later, I learnt that before becoming an actress she used to sing on AIR.

Backstage, a friend introduced me to Rafi Saheb. I was so much in awe of him that I could not utter a word. He held my hand and talked to my friend. Then the strains of Talat Mahmood singing *Phir wohi sham, wohi gham* wafted towards us from the stage and Rafi Saheb became immersed in the music. Suddenly, he turned to my friend and said in chaste Punjabi, "*Wah, kinna sur wich gaande ne Talat Saheb...wah* (How soulfully Talat Saheb sings...)."

I felt privileged to witness that moment when a maestro lauded another master craftsman without a shred of envy! But Rafi Saheb was a generous, unassuming person – the very qualities to which he owed his greatness.

Rafi Saheb was a generous, unassuming person – the very qualities to which he owed his greatness

My second encounter with him occurred when, during a stint with an airlines, I was asked to look after a CIP (Commercially Important Person) and handed a list of names. All of them ended with "Rafi" and I wistfully wished it were the singer. And, miraculously, after all the people on the list had landed, the very last one turned out to be Rafi Saheb. He became the focus of my attention and sensed it, too. After exchanging pleasantries in Punjabi, his family stood by while he and I located his baggage, matched the tag numbers and had the bags loaded. He was no longer a star but a caring husband and father, oblivious to the appreciative looks coming his way!

Much later, while trying my destiny in the film industry, I became part of a set-up in Famous Studios in Bombay's Mahalaxmi. The Shankar-Jaikishan office was on the floor above us. Jaikishan was no longer alive and Shankarji was alone and feeling low. But he would come to the office regularly. I became acquainted with him and he began calling me to his office. He would narrate anecdotes about the people he had worked with.

During one such session, a friend of mine told Shankarji that I sang well. I did sing but only for my friends and in the bathroom. Shankarji persuaded me to sing a few lines and then my friend interjected, saying I sang Rafi songs well. As I was preparing to sing, humming a few lines, the door opened and the great singer himself entered – as if we were part of a typical Hindi film. I was dumbstruck and thankful that I had not begun singing. But the others apprised him of what had been going on and he too began exhorting me to sing. But I did not have the confidence and he prodded me gently, with those famous lyrics: "*Gaate raho, dil se hamesha...*" Everyone laughed.

Those words have stayed with me, epitomizing an era of culture, tradition, class and mastery laced with gentleness that is no more. They come to mind all the more whenever I see the musical shows that abound on television nowadays. g

The writer is a former Senior Director of Doordarshan

gs sood

VALUE TRAP STARES SMALL INVESTORS IN THE FACE

WE now appear to be in a prolonged bear phase where it becomes extremely difficult to predict when the markets will bottom out. In the short term, the markets depend mainly on global cues which are only worsening. The future course will be mainly determined by how the economic and political scenario unfolds and how the corporate sector performs.

In the midst of all this, small investors are a puzzled lot. Whatever stocks they buy even at compellingly cheap valuations based on parameters such as PE, Price to Book Value and dividend yield, they see further erosion in their value and that too steeply. Worried, they ask how low these stocks can go from the already absurdly low valuations. This phenomenon is known as the 'value trap' with most small investors falling into it.

Most of us fail to recognize one very basic and fundamental characteristic of the stock markets ie 'the stock markets are not the thermometer but the barometer of economic activity'

Most of us fail to recognize one very basic and fundamental characteristic of the stock markets ie "the stock markets are not the thermometer but the barometer of economic activity". The current crisis is bringing fundamental changes into the economy at mind-numbing speed. What is currently looking attractive is only the reflection of the past as depicted by the financial statements of a company. The balance sheets may deteriorate at a much faster pace in days to come with the current book value being washed away due to losses in just a couple of quarters. The dividends may just disappear and PEs start looking dangerously high.

One of my friends rightly described, though jokingly, that looking at the pace at which things are going bad, many top corporates may have nothing right on the left side and nothing left on the right side of their balance sheets. Though this may appear an exaggeration, if the crisis persists for a longer period of a year or so it may well turn into reality. The facts have already started pointing to such a scenario in future. Multinationals such as GM, Ford and Citi are cases in point.

Back home, the year-on-year growth in profits reported by the corporate sector in Q2 has shown a steep decline and registered the lowest growth in the last 10 quarters. Operating margins have declined to the lowest in the last 20 quarters. Most companies across various sectors went in for aggressive expansion and/or acquisition drives based on strong internal accruals and easy availability of both domestic and foreign funding. They are the worst affected due to heavy debt servicing burden and other recurring costs related to capex besides being marred by market to market losses for their foreign currency denominated debts. The problems have been further compounded by the slowing demand and increasing rates of interest – which on the one hand has adversely affected the cash flow generation and on the other increased the risk of further borrowing.

The list of troubled industries is expanding fast from real estate and construction to textiles, aviation, financial services, gems and jewellery, and so on. Hospitality, steel, cement, shipping, automobiles, telecom, logistics, pharma and healthcare have also started feeling the heat. With the overall economic scenario deteriorating, the list may expand further. The options available with the government are limited in view of the high fiscal deficit. All this will get reflected in the corporate performance of the coming quarters. So on the whole there is nothing to cheer about. The political statements will also not be of any help to cheer the markets and can at best have an impact for a day or two as is seen on many occasions.

Britannia Industries

(CMP Rs 1100)

BRITANNIA Industries Ltd manufactures, sells, and exports bakery and dairy products including cheese, butter, milk, biscuits, bread, cakes, and rusks. The company's brands include Tiger, Good Day, Milk Bikis, Treat, MarieGold, 50:50, Maska Chaska, Little Hearts, Pure Magic, Nutri Choice, 5 Grains, etc.

For the six months ending September 30, 2008, the company's net profit increased to Rs 936.3 million from Rs 846 million in the same period a year ago, showing an increase of around 11 per cent. Net sales of the company rose to Rs 15,319 million from Rs 12,356 million for the same period, recording a growth of 24 per cent.

With the prices of edible oil sharply correcting and those of wheat, milk and sugar likely to stabilize, the margins are set to increase. The company is also rationalizing pack sizes and hiking prices in the biscuits portfolio. Increased outsourcing, launch of more brands in the premium segment with no competition and double-digit growth recorded by its power brands will further boost profitability.

Britannia, being the largest player with a value and volume market share of 34 per cent and 31 per cent, respectively, is the biggest beneficiary of the excise exemption on biscuits. The increasing utilization of the Baddi facility for manufacturing high-end products is also helping reduce the excise burden. In these turbulent times, the stock, trading at a PE of just 13 times its trailing 12 months, with excellent growth prospects is a must for every investor's portfolio. g

The author has no exposure in the stock recommended in this column. gfiles does not accept responsibility for investment decisions by readers of this column. Investment-related queries may be sent to gfilesindia@gmail.com with Dr Sood's name in the subject line.

Hostels a burning issue at NIFT

THE current Director of the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), Monika Sehgal Garg, is a 1989-batch IAS officer of the UP cadre who has earned notoriety for citing High Court orders, DDA rule, paucity of space *et al* to justify misgovernance, lack of imagination and will to take proactive measures in the face of a crisis.

NIFT, run under the aegis

of the Ministry of Textiles, hires private accommodation to house its students. During the June 2008 admission to the four-year bachelor programme, it promised residential accommodation for girls. Outstation girl students were asked to apply along with demand drafts and were given hostel accommodation. Now, though, Garg has told the students that the facility will not be available after December. The reason, she says, is that the admission prospectus was printed much before the court order compelling it to provide the hostel accommodation and newspaper ads have not fetched the required accommodation.

As an eyewash, she is still collecting the names of girls wanting hostel accommodation to buy time when the institute closes on December 19 for the winter vacation. Her claims that parents were told the facility was available only till December is refuted by the latter. She does not reply to parents' mails or take their calls.

Meanwhile, private hostels that have sprung up around NIFT during the last three months are reportedly confident that NIFT will not extend hostel facilities beyond January at the most because they are hand-in-glove with elements at the institute. The issue of the girls' safety is being ignored in crime-prone Delhi.

Razdan saves the day

WHILE the entire government is threatened by the current spate of recession and is waiting for some miracle to happen in the US economy to reverse the economic slowdown, Power Secretary Anil Razdan has reportedly embarked on a simple yet imaginative exercise to keep his Ministry afloat.

He visualized well in advance that if the suppliers of machinery, raw material and spare parts to the Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) of his Ministry felt the pinch of recession, the latter would also be severely affected. He

therefore asked the PSUs to write to their suppliers expressing willingness to help them in case they felt any liquidity crunch because of the recession. The purpose was two-fold: keeping the PSUs operating efficiently and gaining the confidence of the suppliers.

The feedback was immensely encouraging – all the suppliers replied with expressions of gratitude and were able to manage without help.

AIIMS yet to heal

THE All-India Institute of Medical Sciences has been without a Director since July 2, 2007 when the controversial Dr P Venugopal retired after a long-drawn tussle with the government. The happenings at AIIMS since the anti-quota agitation of May 2006 are well known. The PMO, initially accused of protecting Venugopal, finally made up its mind early last year to ease him out by enacting a law. Its passage in Parliament witnessed

ILLUSTRATIONS: ARUNA

much drama between the treasury and opposition benches.

The sorry state of affairs at AIIMS has not been helped by all this. The Institute Body —the apex controlling authority under the AIIMS Act—took steps to appoint a new Director. The process was completed on August 18 when IB unanimously selected Prof RC Deka, an eminent ENT specialist and currently Dean, as the new Director. But the appointment has not been finalized for three months. The undue delay in the appointment of the doctor from Assam has provided potent ammunition to Northeast MPs, who always complain about New Delhi's attitude towards the region. And despite Prime Minister Manmohan Singh being an RS member from Assam!

Of hirsute matters

ARCHANA Agarwal, a 1990-batch IAS officer of the UP cadre, is better known as the PPP (public-private partnership) lady of the state and is currently executive director of the Udyog Bandhu and Secretary of the industries department. She has issued a *Tughlaqi firman* that shirts should be buttoned till the top to hide chest hair. If the shirt is still unable to hide the hair, then the chest must be shaved. Compliance with this unusual diktat is a hundred per cent!

The lady also has a reputation for riding roughshod over anybody, including her seniors. But she recently met her match in Neeta Chowdhary, a 1977-batch IAS officer and Principal Secretary, Health. Archana tried to overrule the latter regarding the strategy to be adopted for running the Primary Health Centres and Community Health Centres. She was ordered to behave and had to tender an apology.

Unfazed, Archana then locked horns with another senior officer, Alok Ranjan, of the 1978 batch, who was Principal Secretary, Technical Education. She has little to fear as she is the most trusted lieutenant of Cabinet Secretary Shashank Shekhar Singh.g

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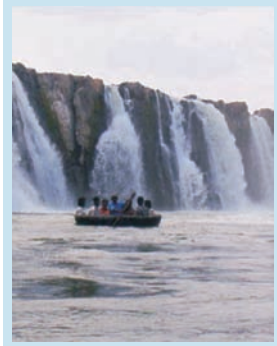

How to get there: Hogenakkal is 40 km from Dharmapuri. Straight buses are operated by TNSTC frequently. Nearest Railway station Dharmapuri .

Best time to visit: Non monsoon season.

Where to stay:

Hotel Tamilnadu TTDC, Hogenakkal.

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